

**REGRESSIVE DEVELOPMENT OF WOMAN'S STATUS
IN PAULINE EPISTLES**

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ABSTRACT

Eight passages included in the Pauline epistles are obviously concerned with woman's status: Gal 3:28, 1 Cor 7:1-7, 1 Cor 11:3-16, 1 Cor 14:33b-35, Col 3:18, Eph 5:22-33, 1 Tim 2:8-15, and Titus 2:4-5.

This thesis examines these passages exegetically. It is discovered that they exhibit two distinct positions. The Pauline passages stand in the egalitarian position of sexual equality; the deuterio-Pauline passages stand in the male chauvinist position that subordinates woman. This distinction applies to passages dealing with woman's status both in general and in the social-ecclesial contexts -- in the context of marriage and in that of worship. As deuterio-Pauline passages are written later than Pauline passages, the development of woman's status is considered regressive.

It is further discovered that two factors may have led to this regressive development:

1. The Pauline churches have not paid enough effort to consolidate the egalitarian position.
2. The deuterio-Pauline churches have conformed to the male chauvinist position prevalent in their *Sitz im Leben*.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ABD	Anchor Bible Dictionary
CBQ	Catholic Biblical Quarterly
HTR	Harvard Theological Review
ICC	International Critical Commentary
JAAR	Journal of the American Academy of Religion
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature
JCE	Journal of Christian Education
JETS	Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society
NTS	New Testament Studies
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature

I. INTRODUCTION

Feminism rose in the twenties and began to arouse the general public's awareness about woman's status in the sixties. It is also spreading its influence in the academic fields. Religion is one of the academic disciplines which are conscious of feminists' voices. Among other religions, Christianity is accused of advocating an ideology that justifies woman's subordinate status. Indeed, many New Testament passages are quoted as evidence for the accusation. Among these passages, those in the Pauline epistles occupy quite a large proportion. The relevant Pauline passages, however, do not represent only one voice. Some of them give us an impression of Paul as a feminist *avant garde*. Others portray him as a male chauvinist, who subordinates woman. The accusation against Christianity as justifying woman's subordinate status actually results from selective reference to and literal interpretation of the male chauvinist passages. The egalitarian passages, that is, which advocate sexual equality, are ignored.

In the Pauline epistles, there are all together eight passages that expresses the authors' view about woman's status. They are Gal 3:28, 1 Cor 7:1-7, 1 Cor 11:3-16, 1 Cor 14:33b-35, Col 3:18, Eph 5:22-33, 1 Tim 2:8-15, and Tit 2:4-5.

The main thesis is that study of the positions reflected in the passages in the Pauline epistles with regard to woman's status reveals a regressive development of the status in early Christian churches. It is to be shown that this development was due to the deficient effort in

promoting the egalitarian position in the Pauline churches on the one hand and the conformity to the *Sitz im Leben* in the deuterio-Pauline churches on the other.

First of all, to indicate the factor of time, the passages will be classified into Pauline and deuterio-Pauline. Pauline passages are considered to have been written before the deuterio-Pauline passages. Relevant to this study, 1 Corinthians and Galatians are categorized as Pauline passages.¹ Colossians, Ephesians, 1 Timothy and Titus are categorized as deuterio-Pauline passages.²

¹1 Cor 14:33b-35 is regarded as a later interpolation and is classified as deuterio-Pauline, although it is placed in an authentically Pauline letter. See the discussion in the relevant section below (III, B, 1).

²New Testament scholars generally agree that at least six canonical letters, namely, Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, 1 Thessalonians, and Philemon, are authentically written by Paul. They are normally referred to as the undisputed or unquestioned Pauline letters. The authenticity of other letters which claim Paul's authorship are controversial. Besides that regarding style and use of vocabularies, many cogent arguments are held by a considerable number of scholars against their authenticity. Relevant to our study, Colossians, Ephesians, and Titus, and 1 Timothy are considered deuterio-Pauline letters. The following briefly summarizes the arguments which support the deuterio-Pauline authorship of these four letters.

a. Colossians

The authenticity of Colossians is controversial. Its authenticity is seriously questioned by James Moffatt (An Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament [Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1961], 155-158) and is rejected by scholars such as Günther Bornkamm (The New Testament: A Guide to Its Writings [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1973], 111-114), Rudolf Bultmann (Theology of the New Testament [London: SCM, 1978], 190), Brendan Byrne (Paul and the Christian Woman [Minnesota: Liturgical, 1988], 81), Victor P. Furnish ("Colossians, Epistle to the" ABD, I, 1090-1096), Mark Kiley (Colossians as Pseudepigraphy [The Biblical Seminar; Sheffield: JSOT, 1986], 37-73), and Eduard Lohse (A Commentary on the Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon [Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971], 177-183).

Decisive arguments against the authenticity of Colossians are related to its theological viewpoints, its portrait of Paul's apostolic office, and its literary dependence on other letters. Firstly, Colossians differs from the unquestioned Paul's letters in theological conceptions with regard to christology, eschatology, ecclesiology, salvation, redemption, the timing of the End, head and body, etc. Major Pauline topics, such as God's gift of righteousness, justification, faith versus works of the law, the function of the law, the Spirit, and freedom in Christ, are missing in Colossians. Secondly, Paul is exalted to a universally, transcending the particulars of time and place, but this universalist conception of Paul's mission cannot be found in his undisputed letters. With regard to Paul's sufferings, Colossians interprets

For clear presentation, the passages will be further divided by their

them as having a function of completing the amount of sufferings which God's people have to endure before the End, but Paul interprets them as serving the function of manifesting the sufferings and death of Jesus. Thirdly, Colossians is found to be literarily dependent on all the six undisputed Pauline letters.

b. Ephesians

Scholars who consider Ephesians a deutero-Pauline letter include Bornkamm (New Testament: A Guide, 111-114), Bultmann (Theology, 190), Furnish ("Ephesians, Epistle to the" ABD, II, 535-542), Edgar Goodspeed (An Introduction to the New Testament [Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1948], 228-239), Luke T. Johnson (The Writings of the New Testament [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986], 369-371), Werner G. Kümmel (Introduction to the New Testament [London: SCM, 1975], 357-363), Ralph P. Martin (New Testament Foundations [Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1978], 221-222), and Moffatt (Literature, 375-389).

Decisive arguments advanced against the authenticity of Ephesians include its theological viewpoints, its portrayal of Paul, its literary dependence on other canonical writings, and its style and vocabulary. Firstly, Ephesians are distinct from the letters of unquestioned Pauline authorship in many theological teachings. These teachings are related to the timing of the End, ecclesiology, christology, etc. Secondly, with regard to the portrayal of Paul, he is admired as a holy apostle without peer in Ephesians. This portrayal, however, is more in keeping with the viewpoint of later church than with Paul's own conception of apostleship. Thirdly, Ephesians' dependence on Colossians reveals its deutero-Pauline authorship. Ephesians' literary relations with Luke, Johannine writings, 1 Peter, and the Pastorals also indicate a period of writing subsequent to that of Paul. The style and usage of certain vocabularies associates Ephesians more with Christian writers in late first and early second centuries.

c. The Pastorals

Scholars who take the Pastorals, which contain Titus and 1 Timothy, as deutero-Pauline include Benjamin W. Bacon (An Introduction to the New Testament [N.Y.: Macmillan Co., 1907], 133-140), Bultmann (Theology, 190), Frank B. Clogg (An Introduction to the New Testament [The London Theological Library; London: University of London Press, 1954], 110-124), Oscar Cullman (The New Testament [London: SCM, 1968], 84-87), Goodspeed (Introduction, 334-344), Archibald M. Hunter (Introducing the New Testament [London: SCM, 1969], 148-150), Johnson (Writings, 382-387), Kümmel (Introduction, 258-272), Martin (Foundations, 300-306), Moffatt (Literature, 402-420), Arthur S. Peake (A Critical Introduction to the New Testament [N.Y.: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1919], 60-71).

Evidences which speak against the authenticity of the Pastorals are both external and internal. Externally, the Pastorals were not included in the Canon of Marcion and were poorly, as well as lately, attested by Christian authors. The internal evidences are historical, theological, and stylistic. Firstly, the biographical data on Paul and other figures cannot be harmonized. The historical situation presupposed by the letters cannot be integrated into chronology of Paul's life. Secondly, the Pastorals differ from the undisputedly authentic Pauline letters in theological concepts such as christology and expectation of the End, and the understanding of faith and righteousness. The Pastorals also exhibit a Church law far more developed than that in Paul's time. They do not include substantive debate about Jewish-Christian-Gnostic false teachings, which is a traditional literary motif of Paul's letters. Stylistically, the Pastorals demonstrate similarities to epistles of both Ignatius and Polycarp. More than any other canonical letter, the Pastorals differ from the rest of the Pauline Corpus in style and vocabularies.

contexts.³ Gal 3:28 and 1 Tim 2:11-15 are considered as applying to general situation. Other Pauline and deuterio-Pauline passages are divided by the contexts to which they address: either the social context of marriage or the ecclesial context of worship is identified.

The two-fold categorization can be summarized in the following table:

<div style="text-align: center;"> <div>Situation</div> <div>Time of Writing</div> </div>	In General	In Social-Ecclesial Contexts	
		In Marriage	In Worship
Pauline	Gal 3:28	1 Cor 7:1-7	1 Cor 11:3-16
Deutero-Pauline	1 Tim 2:11-15	Col 3:18 Eph 5:22-33 Tit 2:4-5	"1 Cor 14:33b-35" 1 Tim 2:8-10

³1 Tim 2:8-10 and 1 Tim 2:11-15 are treated separately as applying to general situation and to the context of worship respectively.

In the following, we shall examine all passages relevant to woman's status, the Pauline passages in Part II and the deutero-Pauline ones in Part III. In the exegetical process, the position of the passages with regard to woman's status will be identified: either as egalitarian, that is, advocating sexual equality, or as male chauvinist, subordinating women. The exegetical process is also an attempt to identify the cultural influence on the writing of the individual passages. It is hypothesized that the egalitarian passages stem from Christian ideas only, but those male chauvinist passages are strongly affected by cultural, such as Jewish or Greco-Roman, considerations or arguments. In Part IV, we shall analyze the factors leading to the regressive development of woman's status.

It is expected that the study should offer a basis on which we shall reflect critically on the situation of Christian churches in the context of Hong Kong and China. This contextual reflection will be put in Part V before the conclusion in Part VI.

II. EGALITARIAN PAULINE PASSAGES

Paul displays his egalitarian advocacy about woman's status in three Pauline passages. The passages are all written in confrontation with pagan influence on Christian thought. They span over the domains in general and in contexts. The one passage dealing with general situation, Gal 3:28, reflects Paul's egalitarian conviction. The other two passages represent his application of the egalitarian conviction to two contexts. In 1 Cor 11:3-16 and 1 Cor 7:1-7, he deals with women's behaviour in the public context of worship and in the private context of marriage respectively.

A. IN GENERAL (Gal 3:28)

In Gal 3:28, Paul asserts his conviction in the unity, thus equality, of all believers in Christ with a pre-Pauline baptismal formula. Its pre-Pauline nature reflects the conceptual ideal of early Christian churches. Paul may have altered its structure in order to avoid the prevailing Gnostic interpretation of the part dealing with the unity of male and female.

1. Equality through Baptism

Many scholars believe that Paul quotes a baptismal formula in Gal 3:26-28.⁴ It may have been formulated in pre-Pauline Christian churches.

⁴Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her* (London: SCM, 1983), 208; Hans D. Betz, *Galatians* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 184; Dennis R. MacDonald, *There is No Male and Female* (Harvard Dissertations in Religion; Philadelphia: Fortress,

Verse 27 points to the immediate context of baptism: "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ". The core message of this baptismal formula is the negation of the three pairs of opposite categories in verse 28:

"there is neither Jew nor Greek [28a],
there is neither slave nor free [28b],
there is no male and female [28c]".

The presence of the pair of Jew/Greek, with the pairs of slave/free and male/female, indicates that it was formulated in a Jewish-Hellenistic community in missionary movement.⁵ The quotation of this formula in other two New Testament passages, namely, 1 Cor 12:13 and Col 3:11, does not include the pair of male/female. Thus Gal 3:28 is the fullest expression of the conviction in the unity of Christians in Christ.

In parallel structure, Gal 3:28 asserts equality within different categories, instead of individuals, and refutes dominance of any category in the Christian community. The rite of initiation by baptism differentiates Christianity from Judaism. Through baptism, the message of equality is conveyed: Greeks, slaves, and women can enjoy the kinship of God as fully as Jews, free, and men correspondingly. All categories are equal before God. Christianity is unlike Judaism, which admits believers by the rite of circumcision and thus bars Greeks, slaves, and women from enjoying this equality. In this light, the concept of equality is closely knitted with baptism.

1987), 9.

⁵Memory, 208-209.

2. Casting off Gnostic Influence

The interpretation of the equality between male and female is endangered by the prevalence of gnostic interpretation.

We can find parallels of the baptismal formula in the gnostic apocryphal literature. Particularly Gal 3:28c, which deals with the pair of male/female, is similar to a Dominical Saying, that is, a saying attributed to Jesus, in the gnostic literature. Indeed, traces of alteration in Gal 3:28c tell us that Paul intends to cast off the gnostic shades of the Dominical Saying while asserting sexual equality in a Christian way.

By examining the traces of alteration and by comparing Gal 3:28c with the Dominical Saying, we shall see how Paul alters the original baptismal formula to achieve his purpose. Then we shall get at Paul's assertion and the social-ecclesial implication of the baptismal formula.

a. Traces of Alteration

Many exegetes observe that the pair of male/female verse 28c breaks the parallel structure in the first two pairs in verse 28ab.⁶ Firstly, each of the first two pairs in verse 28ab follows the pattern of οὐκ . . . οὐδέ . . . (literally "no . . . or . . ."); the pattern of verse 28c is οὐκ . . . καί . . . ("no . . . but/and no . . ."). In brief, the first two pairs of opposites are connected by οὐδέ ("or") but the pair of male/female is by καί ("and"). Secondly, the categories in each pair in verse 28ab are in masculine but in

⁶Ben Witherington, Women and the Genesis of Christianity (Cambridge: CUP, 1990), 164; MacDonald, No Male and Female, 7.

verse 28c they are in neuter.⁷ Thirdly, as mentioned, the male/female pair in verse 28c does not appear in the parallels in 1 Cor 12:13 and Col 3:11. Thus the pair of male/female in Gal 28c seems to be unique in the baptismal formula in Gal 3:26-28.

Two speculations are possible to account for the uniqueness of Gal 3:28c:

- i. The pair of male/female in Gal 3:28c is absent in the original baptismal formula. Gal 3:28c is a secondary addition, either by Paul or a deutero-Pauline writer.⁸

This speculation is not convincing. As the immediate context of Gal 3:26 is about circumcision, there is no reason for Paul to add the pair of male/female, which is irrelevant to the context. There is, moreover, no manuscript evidence which supports this claim: no existing manuscripts exclude the pair of male/female.

- ii. The second speculation is more plausible: the pair of male/female in Gal 3:28c is present in the original version of the formula, but Paul has made some alterations to its structure when he quotes the formula in Gal 3:26-28. On the other hand, since this pair is irrelevant to the contexts of 1 Cor 12:13 and Col 3:11, it is dropped.

⁷The categories of Jews, Greeks, free, and slaves are all in masculine. Paul has to break the pattern since he cannot write "female" in masculine form if he is to assert sexual equality. Thus he uses the neuter form to write both "male" and "female". It is one of the explanations that account for the gender change in the pair of male and female.

⁸Betz thinks that it is a secondary addition (*Galatians*, 182).

Meeks suggests that the alteration is just a stylistic variation.⁹ Once we are aware of the striking similarities between Gal 3:28c and the gnostic Dominical Saying, however, we may not believe that it is so. We may be convinced that it is the similarities that trigger Paul to make the alteration. He is eager to cast off the possible gnostic connotation from the Christian formula. It is also in this light that we shall understand the change of masculine to neuter.

b. The Myth of Androgyne

According to MacDonald, the Dominical Saying is closely associated with a gnostic myth of a primordial androgynous (bisexual) human being.¹⁰ The breaking of the pattern of "neither . . . nor . . ." in "no male and female" in Gal 3:28c is a deliberate breaking away from this myth, which finds its origin in Judaism. The myth of androgyne in gnosticism might have stemmed from Jewish interpretation of Gen 1:27.

Gen 1:27, which talks about God's creation of human beings "male and female", is alluded in Gal 3:28c, although Gal 3:28c negates "male and female". In the Septuagint translation, Gen 1:27 reads "male and female He created him" (emphasis mine). The singular masculine "him" is interpreted as the primordial unification of two sexes to be one androgynous Adam in God's creation.¹¹ Gnosticism thus interprets Gen

⁹Cf. Wayne A. Meeks, "The Image of the Androgyne: Some Uses of a Symbol in Earliest Christianity" (*History of Religions* 13 [1974]), 181, n. 77.

¹⁰MacDonald, *No Male and Female*, 113-126.

¹¹Betz, *Galatians*, 198; Meeks, "Androgyne", 185.

1:27 to mean that one is saved by returning to this androgynous male state in primordial creation through sexual reunification.

Apparently Paul does not agree to this idea of androgyne and its way of salvation. First of all, in 1 Cor 11:3, he mentions the order of creating male and female as two distinct sexes, not as an androgynous being.¹² He thinks that two biologically distinct sexes have been created in creation. Secondly, Paul's notion of two Adams is not compatible with the notion of the androgyne, which is best represented by Philo, a first-century Hellenistic Jew.¹³ Philo thinks that there are two kinds of humanity: the created Adam, as male and female in God's image (Gen 1:27), is the heavenly human; the molded Adam (Gen 2:7) is the earthly human.¹⁴ Salvation is then a return to the created Adam, who is "incorporeal", imperishable, and bisexual.¹⁵

Paul disapproves of this division of the creation of Adam in two successions.¹⁶ For him, the earthly human will be *changed* to be spiritual human through resurrection after Christ (1 Cor 15:42-49). Never does Philo's thought of *returning* to the created Adam constitute his soteriology.

¹²MacDonald, No Male and Female, 119.

¹³Betz grants that the androgynous interpretations of Gen 1:27 and thus to a "Christ-Anthropos", such as Philo's, may have been known to Paul. Paul may then think that Christians should share the androgynous nature in such Christ. Yet, Betz admits that this hypothesis does not receive enough proof (Galatians, 198-199).

¹⁴MacDonald, No Male and Female, 26-27.

¹⁵Ibid., 35.

¹⁶Ibid., 119.

It is through Christ, not through restoration of the "masculofeminine" divine image, i.e., reunification of the two sexes, that one is saved.¹⁷

Not only does Paul not agree to the myth of androgyne and the accompanying idea of salvation, he is also not going to allow them to creep in Christian churches. His negation of "male and female" ("there is no *male and female* [emphasis mine]") implies that in Christ there is no such androgynous being.

We perceive the same implication when we look at the structure of Gal 3:28c as the breaking of the pattern of "neither . . . nor . . ." of Gal 3:28ab. This is particularly clear if we are aware of the existence of the Dominical Saying, which introduces the gnostic version of the myth of androgyne.

The Dominical Saying appears in three gnostic apocryphal books: the Gospel of the Egyptians, the Second Epistle of Clement, and the Gospel of Thomas.¹⁸

In the Gospel of the Egyptians, the Dominical Saying reads:

"When Salome asked when the events about which she inquired would be known the Lord said: 'When you tread upon the garment of shame, and when the two become one, and the male with the female *neither male nor female . . .*'"¹⁹ (emphasis mine)

¹⁷Whenever Paul talks about "new creation", he alludes to the reunification of Jews and Greeks but not of male and female (*Ibid.*, 119). Cf. Meeks, "Androgyne", 185.

¹⁸MacDonald, No Male and Female, 114; Betz, Galatians, 196, n. 119-121; Schüssler Fiorenza, only include the Gospel of Thomas and the Second Epistle of Clement in her discussion (Memory, 212).

¹⁹Cited by "Clement of Alexandria" in Stromateis, which is in turn cited by MacDonald (No Male and Female, 31).

In the Second Epistle of Clement, the preacher quotes Jesus' answer about the coming of the Kingdom:

"When the two shall be one and the outside like the inside, and *the male with the female neither male nor female*" (emphasis mine)

In the Gospel of Thomas, Jesus talks about infants being nursed by their mothers. The disciples ask whether they will enter the Kingdom like the infants. Jesus replies,

"When you make the two one, and when you make the inside like the outside, and the outside like the inside, and the above like the below, and when you make the male and the female one and the same so that *the male not be male nor the female*. . . ." [log. 22b] (emphasis mine)

The Dominical Saying shares striking similarities with Gal 3:28 in both form and theme.²⁰ In form, the Gospel of Thomas and the Second Epistle of Clement mention three pairs of opposite categories (inside/outside, above/below, male/female), list them in pairs, and place the pair of male/female in the final position. So does Gal 3:28. Thematically, the Dominical Saying in the three apocryphal books shares with Gal 3:28 the theme of unification. The Dominical Saying mentions "when the two become one" and Gal 3:28 states about "unity", although the pairs referred to differ.

MacDonald suggests that Paul is probably aware of the presence of the Dominical Saying when he quotes the baptismal formula in Galatians. Although the apocryphal literature in which the Dominical Saying is found was circulated decades after the writing of Galatians, it is plausible that

²⁰Ibid., 14.

the Dominical Saying was transmitted orally long before Galatians was written.²¹ Thus Paul may have heard about the Dominical Saying when he writes Galatians. As he does not agree to the myth of androgyne and its way of salvation, he probably replaces the "neither . . . nor . . ." pattern with "no . . . and . . ." in Gal 3:28c. The subtle change then represents his ingenious effort to cast off the gnostic influence.

3. Assertion of Sexual Equality

By altering the structure of the part dealing with male and female of the original baptismal formula, Paul may be asserting the unique part of the Christian faith: true sexual equality.

"Neither male nor female" is a common phrase in the Dominical Saying and is normally understood in gnostic terms. This phrase is probably included in the original baptismal formula. Paul may be aware of the danger of gnostic influence and alters the phrase to read "no male and female". It may then be his assertion of Christian faith in the face of gnostic deflection.

Paul's anxiety is reasonable. Gnostic teaching is so prevailing that the preacher of the Second Epistle of Clement shares with Paul the same anxiety. The preacher also fears that the Gentile converts will fall prey to

²¹Refer to the whole chapter which argues that Gal. 3:26-28 is more primitive than the Dominical Saying (Ibid., 113-126).

gnostic teachings.²² Thus he deliberately adds his own interpretation immediately after the quotation of the Dominical Saying:

"male with the female neither male nor female" means this: that when a brother sees a sister he should not think of her sex any more than she should think of his. [12.1-6]²³ (emphasis mine)

Indeed the Dominical Saying has the mythic background of the primordial, incorporeal androgyne.²⁴ In both the Gospel of Thomas and the Gospel of Egyptians, "when the two become one" means physical reunification of the sexes and "the male with the female neither male nor female" means abstinence from sexual relations.²⁵ When the sexes are reunified, "there is neither male nor female". In other words, biological sex distinctions will be abolished; sexual relations will no longer exist.

If the baptismal formula did have "there is neither male nor female", it would be "the first occurrence of a doctrine openly propagating the abolition of sex distinctions".²⁶ It would carry the gnostic connotation of the sexually reunified androgyne.

For Paul, however, biological distinctions still exist in Christ. Unlike the gnostic unification, Christian unification is not physical in nature. As we shall hardly take the unity of the pairs of Jews/Greeks or slave/free as physical in nature, it is also hard to take that of the pair of male/female

²²Schüssler Fiorenza, Memory, 212.

²³Cited in ibid.

²⁴Ibid., 51.

²⁵MacDonald, No Male and Female, 49-50.

²⁶Betz, Galatians, 197.

as physical. The oneness in Christ is not anthropological; it is ecclesiological.²⁷ In order to prevent the pair of male/female from being interpreted in gnostic terms, Paul probably modifies its structure in the pair of male/female. In other words, this modification may be taken as Paul's deliberate reaction to and negation of the gnostic connotation.

On the other hand, allusion to Gen 1:27 may reveal that Paul is thinking of the Jewish distinction of male and female in terms of procreative capacities.

The allusion to Gen 1:27 not only serves the purpose of negating the androgynous connotation, as mentioned, it is also a negation of the Jewish distinction of "male and female" in terms of procreative capacities. In Gen 1:27, "male and female" is mentioned immediately before introducing the theme of procreation and fertility.²⁸ The Jews understand "male and female" in terms of marriage and family. The negation of "male and female" in Gal 3:28c then implies the abolition of distinctions based on procreative capacities.²⁹ When procreation is no more important, the value of being female no longer lies in her procreative capacities.

On the surface, both Gal 3:28c and the Dominical Saying advocate sexual equality. The gnostic concept of the reunification of the sexes seems to be an advocacy of sexual equality; it does not, however. When male and female become one, the female will only be saved by becoming male, as

²⁷Schüssler Fiorenza, *Memory*, 214.

²⁸*Ibid.*, 211; Witherington also alludes it to Gen. 1:27 (*Genesis*, 164).

²⁹Schüssler Fiorenza, *Memory*, 212-213.

a living spirit.³⁰ This notion of "perfected masculinity" appears in the circles from which the Dominical Saying springs, namely, Hellenistic Judaism, Valentinianism, and Syrian "Thomas" Christianity.³¹

By casting off the myth of returning to androgynous state of reunified sexes in Gal 3:28c, Paul may have relieved the female from the burden of being saved only by becoming male. Thus, by altering the structure, he has done a splendid work of filtering the gnostic influence and asserting true sexual equality.

4. Social-ecclesial Implication

Although the baptismal formula is eschatological in nature, this equality in Christ should function not only in baptism or in concept. The equality should also function in "social-ecclesial realm".³² Despite its revolutionary nature, the statement is not just a product of "excessive enthusiasm" because it is intended to be applied to daily life situation.³³ From his works and two events, we shall be ensured about this social intention on Paul's part, at least with regard to the first two pairs of opposite categories, Jews/Greeks and slaves/free. Is it not natural that

³⁰Meeks, "Androgyne", 194-195.

³¹MacDonald, No Male and Female, 98-99.

³²Betz thinks that the baptismal formula has the eschatological nature, which is a common element with the form of the beatitude. However, the formula would also inform the newly initiated "how this status . . . changes their social, cultural, and religious self-understanding, as well as their responsibilities in the here-and-now" (Galatians, 183); Schüssler Fiorenza, Memory, 210; See how most commentators deny that Paul has social and political implications (Betz, Galatians, 189, n. 68).

³³Schüssler Fiorenza, Memory, 210.

Paul also has such social intention with regard to the third pair of male/female?

Paul's employment of the present tense ("you are") in Gal 3:27 indicates that what the statement declares has been realized.³⁴ It implies that the ideals of the ancient world, which are the abolition of the distinctions between different religious and social categories, have been realized.³⁵

Paul expresses his concern for the realization of the equality between Jews and Greeks throughout his works. This concern is manifest in the Epistle to the Romans, which had been written before he was martyred in Rome. He is not concerned with religious equality only. The religious equality is applied to the pair of Jews and Greeks as well as to that of slaves and free.

The Antioch event indicates Paul's conviction with regard to the equality of Jews and Greeks. Specifically, he confronted the "great apostles" in Antioch (Gal 2:11-14). When Peter and Barnabas succumbed to the pressure of Jewish Christians and avoided eating with the Gentile Christians, Paul charged them of not acting "in consistency with the truth of the gospel" (Gal 2:14).³⁶ With this reference, we can be sure that Paul

³⁴Betz, *Galatians*, 189. Schüssler Fiorenza, "Word, Spirit and Power: Women in Early Christianity" ed. by Rosemary R. Ruether & Eleanor McLaughlin, *Women of Spirit* (N.Y.: Simon & Schuster, 1979), 32.

³⁵Betz, *Galatians*, 190; Schüssler Fiorenza, *Memory*, 221.

³⁶Betz, *Galatians*, 190.

took equality in Christ as the truth of the gospel. Religious equality of Jews and Greeks thus has social-ecclesial consequences.³⁷

With regard to slavery, what the formula states is similar to that of Judaism. Initiation into Judaism had social impact on slaves: they would be freed by their owners at the approval of the synagogue.³⁸ It is reasonable to believe, however, that initiation of slaves themselves might not produce the same effect. It might just be what happened when the slave-owners were initiated. Or else, all slaves would use this way to free themselves.

This might exactly be the case of Onesimus. He might have been led by the formula to expect freedom when he was converted to Christianity. Yet Paul did not have the authority to command Onesimus' owner, Philemon, to set Onesimus free. Thus Paul sent Onesimus back with a euphemistic letter.³⁹ 1 Cor 7:21 also deals with the issue of slavery. Yet it may be interpreted very differently. Paul may be asking slaves to bear with the social institution of slavery. He may be, on the other hand, appealing them to get freedom as far as possible because they are already

³⁷Schüssler Fiorenza also insinuates that, in addition to the above arguments, as "in Judaism religious differences according to the law were also expressed in communal behavior and social practice", Christian churches should also have realized the religious equality in social-ecclesial realm (Memory, 210).

³⁸Ibid., 214-215. She has evaded the exegetical problem of 1 Cor. 7:21, which may offset her argument for Paul's insistence in setting slaves free.

³⁹Ibid., 215.

free in the Lord. In any case, the Onesimus incident reflects the difficulty in implementing his egalitarian conviction.⁴⁰

The Antioch event and the Onesimus incident do show us that Paul did intend to translate religious equality of the first two pairs of opposites into social terms, although it was difficult. Would it be, therefore, quite natural that he also had the same social intention with regard to the third pair of male and female, that he would have thought of equality of the sexes in real terms?

To sum up the above discussion about Gal 3:28, it is a baptismal formula that expresses equality in Christ. It is highly probable that Paul deliberately alters the pattern of the part dealing with male and female (3:28c) to avoid its being interpreted in association with the Jewish and gnostic myth of androgyne. In so doing, he no longer follows the Jewish distinction of male and female by their procreative capabilities. He also relieves women from resorting to the gnostic way of salvation by becoming man, which actually connotes sexual inequality. What Paul expresses in Gal 3:28c is his concept of true sexual equality which should be intended to be applied in social-ecclesial contexts.

⁴⁰"Paul's reaction in Philemon, sending the slave Onesimus back to his master, shows that the baptismal message created social problems with unforeseeable consequences. Paul's elaborate recommendations to protect Onesimus show how painful it must have been for him to take such action" (Betz, *Galatians*, 195).

B. IN SOCIAL-ECCLESIAL CONTEXTS

Two Pauline passages give specific instructions about women's behaviour in social-ecclesial contexts: one in the social context of marriage, another in the ecclesial context of worship. These two contexts cover the private and the public domains of life of women. As translation in real terms of the Pauline passage that advocates sexual equality in general, i.e. Gal 3:28, these two Pauline passages present the same ideas about women's status in social-ecclesial contexts.

1. In Marriage (1 Cor 7:1-7)

1 Cor 7 is the beginning of Paul's replies, each preceded by *περί* ("about" or "concerning"), to the questions raised by the Corinthian congregation. The chapter unravels Paul's opinions about celibacy and marriage. 1 Cor 7:1-7 is the only biblical source from which we can learn about Paul's stance about marital relationship. This passage is an application of his conviction in sexual equality in response to the Corinthians' gentile ascetic behaviour in marriage.⁴¹

a. Sexual Abstinence in Marriage

"It is well for a man not to touch a woman" (1 Cor 7:1) is a statement: either a Corinthian slogan or Paul's response to a question raised by the

⁴¹It is likely that Paul has the baptismal formula (Gal. 3:28) in mind when he writes 1 Cor. 7:1-24. The equality of male-female is prominent, but those of circumcised-uncircumcised and slave-free are also mentioned in passing in 7:18-19 and 7:20-23 respectively (Schüssler Fiorenza, *Memory*, 220-221).

Corinthians. From its context, we understand that "touching someone" means "having sexual relationship with him or her". The statement commends its contrary, that is, sexual abstinence. Whether it is a Corinthian slogan which Paul quotes or his own response to a question, Paul does opt for sexual abstinence in the form of celibacy (7:7) and commends it for others (7:32-35).

A pragmatic consideration leads him to make a concession (7:6), however. Sexual irregularities or immoralities may be very prevalent in the congregation in a promiscuous city like Corinth (5:1). For fear that celibacy will lead some people to such irregularities, he concedes that "each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband" (7:2). While he commends celibacy but not marriage, he does not condemn marriage as evil.

Sexual asceticism might be exercising its influence on the Corinthian Christians.⁴² In the Corinthian congregation, there may even be ascetic tendency to practice sexual abstinence within marriage. Sexual abstinence within marriage was alien to Christianity but was advocated by the gentile thought as in "Stoic morality (e.g. Epictetus and Seneca), Pythagorean philosophy, the religion of Isis along with other dualistic cults, the writings from Qumran, and Philo".⁴³ This alarms Paul.

⁴²Archibald Robertson & Alfred Plummer, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians [I.C.C.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1958], 131-132.

⁴³David L. Balch, "Backgrounds of I Cor. VII: Saying of the Lord in Q; Moses as an Ascetic *εεῖος Ἀνῆρ* in II Cor III", NTS 18 (1972), 351.

On the one hand, he does not want to give up his preference for celibacy. He would not like to comply with either the Jewish tradition or the Greco-Roman norm about marriage. The Jewish tradition considers marriage and procreation obligations of men.⁴⁴ Celibacy is thus not a Jewish value. It is also not a Greek norm.⁴⁵ Nor is it allowed in the Roman empire.⁴⁶ Paul's advocacy of celibacy is therefore "a frontal assault on the intentions of existing law and the general cultural ethos".⁴⁷

On the other hand, Paul cannot tolerate the creeping in of the gentile notion of ascetic sexual behaviour into the marriage of Christians. Firstly, he is concerned that sexual abstinence, within or outside marriage, may lead some people to sexual immoralities (7:5b). Secondly, he believes that fulfilling one's marital partner's conjugal right is one's duty. He maintains that if one is engaged in marital bond one should consummate it fully. In other words, one is obliged to give one's marital partner his or her conjugal rights in marriage (7:3).

Paul concedes to marriage to avoid sexual irregularities. He still has to ensure that each party in marriage should enjoy equal conjugal rights.

⁴⁴Hans Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), 114; Schüssler Fiorenza, Memory, 225. Cf. Charles K. Barrett, A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1968), 154-155.

⁴⁵Barrett, First Epistle to Corinthians, 155; Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, 114.

⁴⁶The Roman empire legislated against celibacy in the New Testament times to secure the birth rate (Schüssler Fiorenza, Memory, 225; Balch, "Backgrounds of 1 Cor. VII", 353).

⁴⁷Schüssler Fiorenza, Memory, 225.

b. Mutual and Equal Rights

Paul's employment of specific words indicates that he considers the fulfilment of conjugal rights obligatory.⁴⁸

Paul uses parallel structure to emphasize that both men and women are bound by this marital obligation. In verse 3, he states in parallel structure that the conjugal rights are reciprocal and mutual. He further strengthens by another parallel in verse 4, where Paul states: "the wife does not rule over her own body, but the husband does; likewise, the husband does not rule over his own body, but the wife does." One does not have ἐξουσία ("authority") over one's body, but one's marital partner does. This principle applies to men as well as to women. They are equal in marriage. Verse 3 is thus coupled with verse 4 to give a forceful advice: a husband and a wife enjoy equal and reciprocal conjugal rights and obligations towards each other. This may be unthinkable in a conventional patriarchal society, in which a wife does not even have the right to demand intercourse with her husband.⁴⁹

In stating the condition how one can be exempted from fulfilling the conjugal obligation, Paul again expresses his awareness about sexual equality. Paul may be thinking of the Jewish rabbis' sexual abstention. They abstain from sexual relationship when they have to study the Torah or pray continuously. Paul differs from them by one condition: the wife

⁴⁸Robertson & Plummer, First Epistle to Corinthians, 133.

⁴⁹Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, 117, n. 21 & n. 24.

should be consulted.⁵⁰ His instruction to seek mutual consent further reflects his concern not only about the husband's right. Paul uses an imperative (*ἀποδιδότω*, "to pay [a debt]" or "to render [a due]") to describe the conjugal obligation one owes to one's spouse in marriage.

Sexual equality is not confined to conjugal rights, however.⁵¹ 1 Corinthians is full of examples of male-female parallelism, with regard to initiation to divorce in marriage between believers or in mixed marriage, celibacy, maintenance of mixed marriage between marital relationship, and anxieties in marriage.⁵² Such parallel expressions connote Paul's correction of Jewish and Gentile ideas about the relationship of man and women.⁵³

To sum up about 1 Cor 7:1-7, Paul writes it in response to the gentile influence that may lead to ascetic sexual abstinence within marriage. He expresses his attitude towards fulfilment of marital obligations by developing his conviction in sexual equality. He advocates an egalitarian relationship between husband and wife.

2. In Worship (1 Cor 11:3-16)

Worship is an important public context in which women are found. 1 Cor 11:3-16 records Paul's instruction about women's head attire in the

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, 117 & n. 26; Robertson & Plummer, *First Epistle to Corinthians*, 134.

⁵¹Cf. Schüssler Fiorenza, *Memory*, 225.

⁵²Verses 2, 3, 4, 10-11, 12-13, 14-16, 28, 33-34 (Witherington, *Genesis*, 125).

⁵³Robertson & Plummer, *First Epistle to Corinthians*, 134.

ecclesial context. It is his response to a situation which may mix Christian churches with pagan cults. We can notice Paul's assertion of sexual equality in such critical situation in spite of the crisis.

The content of this passage can be summarized in one sentence: Paul asks pneumatic women to put on certain head attire while prophesying and praying in worship. On the other hand, it is one of the most intricate passages in Paul's writings. The grounds Paul argues for the head attire are so convoluted that some literary critics are alarmed about its authenticity.⁵⁴

Scroggs's comments are representative of the difficulties confronting the critics: "The logic is obscure at best and contradictory at worst. The word choice is peculiar; the tone, peevish."⁵⁵ Almost every verse in it arouses very diversified interpretations. We therefore have to devote a great deal of effort to unravel its meaning.

As mentioned, the purpose for writing 1 Cor 11:3-16 is to insist the women's wearing certain head attire in worship. Deciding from the text

⁵⁴Arguing that the passage is interpolation and is non-Pauline: W. O. Walker, "1 Corinthians 11:2-16 and Paul's Views regarding Women", *JBL* 94 (1975) 94-110; Idem, "The 'Theology of Woman's Place' and the 'Paulinist' Tradition", *Semeia* 28 (1983) 102-112; Lamar Cope, "1 Cor. 11:2-16: One Step Further", *JBL* 97:3 (1978) 435-436. The most cogent argument of Walker is: the passage breaks the context and can be removed as a block without interrupting the flow from 11:1 or 11:2 to 11:17. His other arguments about the obscurities of the passage are explained by various commentators, though not quite satisfactorily. His proposal that the passage is non-Pauline and is an interpolation has not yet been widely accepted.

Rejecting Walker's arguments: Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, "The Non-Pauline Character of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16?" *JBL* 95/4 (1976) 615-621; Idem, "Interpolations in 1 Corinthians", *CBQ* 48 (1986) 81-94; Idem, "1 Corinthians 11:2-16 Once Again", *CBQ* 50 (1988) 265-274.

⁵⁵Robin Scroggs, "Paul and the Eschatological Woman", *JAAR* 40 (1972), 297.

what head attire is exactly required of women and its connotation, we shall understand, firstly, Paul's line of thought in his arguments and, secondly, the occasion that urges him to put forward the instruction. The study of this Pauline passage will reveal to us how Paul applies his concept of sexual equality to a real situation that is fraught with cultural problems.

a. Insistence on Proper Head Attire

Throughout the passage, Paul insists that Corinthian women should wear proper head attire in worship when they pray and prophesy. He poses three categories of arguments: a Jewish one, two Stoic ones, and one of church practice.

i. Jewish Argument

1 Cor 11:10 summarizes 1 Cor 11:3-10. It is evident from Paul's usage of the singular "this" (τοῦτο) in verse 10 to refer backward. Although 1 Cor 11:3-10 is the most intricate part of 1 Cor 11:3-16, Paul's treatment reveals that it constitutes only one argument, a Jewish one.⁵⁶ Indeed, only when the argument is understood from a Jewish light, particularly with reference to the Jewish interpretations of Gen 1:27 in the so-called first creation narrative and Gen 2:18-23 in the so-called second creation narrative, shall we understand its obscurities: the hierarchy of κεφαλή, women as men's reflection, and protection against the angels. In this Jewish parenesis, women are taken as men's subordinates.

⁵⁶Barrett, First Epistle to Corinthians, 253.

Verse 3 is the pillar of the Jewish theological argument for women's subordinate status.

Here, a chain of order of God-Christ-man-woman is laid down. Each one in this chain of order is the κεφαλὴ ("head") of the subsequent one.

The meaning of κεφαλὴ ("head") is therefore determinant of our understanding of this verse. We shall find that κεφαλὴ ("head") actually encompasses both the Jewish interpretation of the creation order and the accompanying notion of hierarchy. When the notion is applied to the relationship between men and women, κεφαλὴ ("head") justifies the subordinate position of women.

a) Meaning of κεφαλὴ ("head")

In the Old Testament, κεφαλὴ ("head") denotes ruling over a community, but not over another person.⁵⁷ The Greek word does not have such native meaning, but it has this meaning in Greek-speaking Judaism.⁵⁸ A metaphorical Greek usage of κεφαλὴ is "the outstanding and determining part of a whole" or "origin/source".⁵⁹ Κεφαλὴ ("head") thus has the meaning of "source", the "causal priority in the order of creation", from

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, 183 and 183, n. 21, 22.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, 248.

⁵⁹*Ibid.* Scroggs draws support for the meaning of "origin" or "source" from S. Bedale, Schlier, Kähler, and Whiteley ("Eschatological Woman", 298-299, n. 41). Murphy-O'Connor also remarks that this meaning is "well attested in classical Greek" and "the connotation of 'supremacy' or 'authority'. . . is not attested for κεφαλὴ in profane Greek" ("Sex and Logic in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16", *CBO* 42 [1980] 492).

which "authority" is derived.⁶⁰ In other words, it has a combined meaning of "source" and "authority". It implies a simultaneous "originating and subordinating relationship".⁶¹

b) Implication of κεφαλῇ ("head")

Ἀνδρῶς ("men" or "husbands") and γυναικῶς ("women" or "wives") are therefore tied to this "originating and subordinating relationship". This two-fold relationship is the result of patriarchal Jewish interpretations of Gen 1:27 and Gen 2:18-23.

The originating relationship, which involves the nature of subordination too, is verified by vv.8f. The two verses explain why woman is the glory of man but not image and glory of God. The creation order alluded in Gen 2:18 and 2:22 is adduced as support. Eve was created from Adam and for Adam. Thus, women are derived from men; women's existence depends on men.

The subordinating relationship is supported by vv.7 & 10.

The egalitarian Gen 1:27, which states that "God created human beings male and female", is alluded in verse 7. Yet, in Jewish tradition, the application of Gen 1:27 is narrowed from "human beings" to "men" only.⁶² In referring to (God's) "image"

⁶⁰Murphy-O'Connor, "Non-Pauline?", 617.

⁶¹Quoted phrase by Barrett (First Epistle to Corinthians, 249).

⁶²Morna D. Hooker, "Authority on Her Head: An Examination of 1 Cor 11:10", NTS 10 (1963-64) 411.

(εἰκῶν) to men only, women are deprived of God's image. The Jewish idea that relates the rule about a man's uncovering his head and a man as God's image is introduced.⁶³

The Jewish midrashic presupposition is apparent: Christ is omitted from the series;⁶⁴ women are excluded from being direct images of God.⁶⁵ They are only, in a derivative sense, men's reflection (δόξα).⁶⁶ Women are more remote from God than men are: they relate to God indirectly, only with men as media.⁶⁷

Verse 10 is a summary statement of the Jewish argument. One more Jewish reason for the head attire is added: because of the angels. Angels are watchers and protectors of the order of creation present at the divine worship. Women have to wear the proper head attire to acknowledge their role in the creation order: from men and for men; or the angels will attack the women.

⁶³Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, 186.

⁶⁴Ibid. Of course, if "Christ" alludes to the Christian community, the exclusion of "Christ" in verse 7 is accountable.

⁶⁵Cf. Scroggs, "Eschatological Woman", 301; Barrett, First Epistle to Corinthians, 248-249; Hooker, "Authority", 411.

⁶⁶Hooker observes that it is on the contrast between man and woman, which is found in Jewish interpretation, "that the different regulations regarding head-coverings are based ("Authority", 411).

⁶⁷Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, 186.

A Jewish interpretation smoothly connects the mention of men possessing God's image in verse 7, the creation order in vv.8f, and the argument about angels here. According to this Jewish interpretation, possessing God's image is equivalent to having authority over all living creatures, including the angels. As mentioned in verse 7, only Adam, not Eve, has been granted God's image. Thus only men have authority over the angels.⁶⁸ Women do not have that authority. Thus they have to wear the head attire to assume their husbands' authority over the angels. It represents the women's acknowledgment of their role in the creation order. The head attire is also meant to compensate a woman's natural weakness because of her lacking direct divine image.⁶⁹

The whole Jewish argument is based on the theological assumption that women are destined to be subordinate to men since creation.

ii. Stoic Arguments

Besides the Jewish argument, Paul resorts to Stoic arguments. He summons the readers' own power of discernment on the basis of propriety (v.13). Then he appeals to the judgement of nature (vv.14-15). By nature, he may be thinking of "the natural world as God made it", which distinguishes woman from man.⁷⁰ Paul may have

⁶⁸MacDonald, No Male and Female, 94-95.

⁶⁹Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, 189.

⁷⁰Ibid., 256.

introduced the Hellenistic belief that nature determines a person's appearance or behaviour.⁷¹ Both the appeals to propriety and nature are concessive that the previous Jewish argument (vv.3-10) is not conclusive.⁷²

iii. Argument of Church Practice

The need to put forward the argument of church practice implies that even the appeals to nature and propriety are not conclusive. Verse 16 betrays his awareness that these arguments are shaky. Paul may be aware that both the Jewish and Stoic arguments are not appropriate for his purpose. He therefore turns to the universality of this practice among churches.

To sum up, all the above three categories of arguments reflect Paul's insistence on certain proper head attire. Before we can learn about Paul's attitude towards woman's status, we have to learn exactly what head attire is meant and its connotation.

⁷¹Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, 190. In Epictetus I. xvi. 9-14: "Let us leave the main works of nature, and behold her minor works. Is there anything less useful than the hair on the chin? What then? Has not nature used this also in the most fitting way possible? Has she not by means of it distinguished the male and the female? Has not the nature of each one of us immediately cried out from afar, I am a man; on this understanding approach me, speak to me, seek nothing else; here are the signs? Again, in regard to women, as she has mingled something gentler in the voice so she has taken away the hair (of the chin) . . . For this reason we ought to keep the signs that God has given, we ought not throw them away, nor to confound, so far as we can, the distinctions of the sexes." Cited by Barrett, First Epistle to Corinthians, 256-257.

⁷²Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, 190.

b. Meaning of Proper Head Attire

Paul insists that woman should wear proper head attire when she prays and prophesies in worship. To learn about the occasion for Paul insistence in woman's wearing it in worship, we have to find out what kind of head attire he demands exactly.

In brief, two explanations are posed about the head attire: bound hair or veils. In any case, the interpretation must achieve an agreement among three relevant words: *κατακαλύπτω* ("covering", vv.4f), *ἐξουσία* ("authority", v.10), and *περιβολαίου* ("something around", v.15). Let us first examine the arguments for the two proposals one after another.

i. Proposal of Bound Hair

Based on her interpretation about women's behaviour in worship in pagan cults, Schüssler Fiorenza proposes that the proper head attire denotes bound hair.

She speculates that Paul instructs the Corinthian women to bind their hair to differentiate themselves from the women in pagan cults, who were used to unbinding their hair in worship. The flowing of unbound hair was intended to impress the congregation that they were filled with the spirit. One of such cults, the cult of Isis, had a major centre in Corinth. Incidentally, it claimed that women were equal in power with men. The Corinthian women might imitate the behaviour of their pagan sisters in the Isis cult to exercise sexual equality.⁷³

⁷³Schüssler Fiorenza, *Memory*, 227.

Interpreting the proper attire as bound hair may solve the apparent discrepancy between vv.5f and v.15. Long hair is given to woman as a περιβολαίου (v.15), a "wrapper", "something that is 'thrown around' an object".⁷⁴ It means that she should bind her own hair around her head like a covering.

This interpretation also clarifies the meaning of ἐξουσία ("authority") and that of the nature of angels (v.10). Schüssler Fiorenza explains that bound hair symbolizes a woman's exercising control over her head. Thus, ἐξουσία ("authority"), which can only be understood in the active sense, may denote a woman's authority over her physical head or her metaphorical head, man. Unbound hair, on the other hand, may invite angels' attack because it is a sign of cultic uncleanness.⁷⁵ From Schüssler Fiorenza's explanation, the proper head attire, as bound hair, confers authority to women.

ii. Proposal of Veil

Taking the proper head attire to denote veil is more popular than taking it to denote bound hair.

Reading proper head attire as meaning veil explains directly the opaque instruction of "wearing ἐξουσία ('authority') in verse 10. As found in many early manuscripts, the Greek word for "veil" and that

⁷⁴Murphy-O'Connor, "Sex and Logic", 488.

⁷⁵Schüssler-Fiorenza, *Memory*, 228.

for "authority" is interchangeable.⁷⁶ Probably because the Corinthians, including the women, always use "authority" to defend their unlimited freedom, Paul uses "authority" to refer to the veil.⁷⁷

Wearing the veil, denoted by περιβολαίου ("a garment") in verse 15, is a completion of long hair, which nature gives a woman.⁷⁸ Paul's instruction to man, as a contrasting example to that to woman, also supports this interpretation.

Man's head should not be κατὰ κεφαλῆς ("pressed against" or "having something hanging down"; v.4).⁷⁹ As Jewish priests used to pray with turbans on their heads, it should not be turbans that is forbidden to men. It may be long hair that is forbidden (v.14). Yet, long hair is admired in the Old Testament as well as in Palestinian Judaism. It may still be so in the New Testament time. In Acts 18:18, Paul is reported to have cut his hair at Cenchreae to keep his vow. Then he would not appeal to nature to ban long hair for men.⁸⁰

⁷⁶MacDonald, *No Male and Female*, 87. G. Kittel arrives at the same interpretation of ἐξουσία, but from a different observation. He has discovered that ἐξουσία and κάλυμμα ("veil") can be traced to the same Aramaic root. Yet Paul would not have presupposed such ingenious Aramaic linguistic knowledge on his Corinthian readers (Hooker, "Authority", 413).

⁷⁷The word "authority" appears most often in the letters to Corinth, more in 1 Corinthians (MacDonald, *No Male and Female*, 93).

⁷⁸Barrett, *First Epistle to Corinthians*, 257.

⁷⁹The usage of κεφαλῆ with the genitive to designate something "exercising a downward motion", like a veil, is unusual ("Sex and Logic", 484). This possibility cannot be discarded, nevertheless.

⁸⁰This unresolved problem is one of the arguments which Walker poses against Pauline authorship for this passage ("Paul's View of Women", 107-108).

Even if the Acts record is not accurate, it at least tells us that the writer of Acts does not consider long hair shameful.

Either wearing turbans or wearing long hair should not be shameful for man. "It is shameful for man to have long hair" may actually mean that his head should not have anything hanged down by things like veils. Unlike women, men do not have the hint to wear veils. Forbidding men against wearing veils is to contrast the need for women to wear veils.

iii. Conclusion about meaning of Head Attire

To conclude the above discussion about the meaning of proper head attire, taking the proper head attire to mean bound hair leaves as many problems unsolved as taking it to mean veils. Yet, Schüssler Fiorenza's ground on which she bases her proposal of bound hair -- her interpretation of the text about women's behaviour in pagan cults -- may be inaccurate. A more natural reading of the text about women in pagan cults is that they removed their veils.⁸¹ Thus the ground for the explanation of bound hair collapses. Moreover, the explanations stemming from the proposal of veil are more direct and less strained than those stemming from the proposal of bound hair. Thus it is more plausible that the head attire denotes veil.

Hooker proposes that Paul has transformed veil to symbolize women's authority while it is used to be a symbol of women's

⁸¹MacDonald, No Male and Female, 86.

subordination. Paul probably tries to reverse the implication of the creation order.⁸²

According to Hooker, ἐξουσία does not mean "dignity", "protection", or "a sign of authority of a woman's husband on her". Woman now shares man's active role of praying and prophesying to God, which she previously is not allowed. Hooker suggests that ἐξουσία on woman's head is a symbol of this authority. Angels are responsible for seeing to propriety in worship. The ἐξουσία notifies them of this new arrangement about woman. Moreover, the glory of woman's head, i.e., the glory of man, must be covered so that only God is glorified in worship; otherwise, man is dishonoured.⁸³

Hooker's proposal is strained, however. If ἐξουσία ("authority") does mean woman's new authority to be equal to man, verse 10 should go with vv.11f, which also implies this equality. The introduction in verse 11 by a reversing conjunction, "nevertheless", as it is, is thus inappropriate. Besides, if Paul really wants to offer woman new authority, there is no need for him to draw support from nature (v.14), from church practice (v.16), and to argue so obscurely.

Indeed veils can actually only be understood as a symbol of subjection of woman to her husband. It had such connotation in both Hellenistic Judaism and rabbinic Judaism.⁸⁴

⁸²Murphy-O'Connor ("Sex and Logic", 497), Scroggs ("Eschatological Woman", 302), and Barrett (*First Epistle to Corinthians*, 255) concur with this view of Hooker.

⁸³Hooker, "Authority", 412, 415.

⁸⁴MacDonald, *No Male and Female*, 89-90.

In the Jewish rabbis' understanding, a veil is a garment of shame.⁸⁵ Due to her lack of God's image, Eve was not only deprived of the authority over all creation, including the angels, she was also vulnerable to the spirit world. She was consequently deceived by the serpent and was cursed to wear a veil. Eve's female descendents, women, have to wear a veil to mourn her sin. A veil thus reminds people of woman's sin, shame, and her lack of divine image.

Although veiling practice for non-Jews, such as Greeks and Romans, was more liberal than for Jews, a veil was still an emblem of shame that indicated woman's inferiority.⁸⁶

In brief, we should be aware that the insistence on wearing of veils permeates 1 Cor. 11:3-16. From the Jewish argument, the Stoic arguments of propriety and nature, and the argument of church practice, this insistence is the message. On the other hand, Paul should have been aware that the veil on which he insists, as the proper head attire, connotes subordination of woman.

There are two questions that we should ask at this stage: Firstly, why does he insist on this veiling practice? Secondly, does he mean to subordinate woman by imposing this practice on woman? In other words, does he agree to the connotation of the behaviour of wearing veils when

⁸⁵Ibid., 93-94.

⁸⁶Ibid., 89-90.

he insists the wearing of veils? We shall be able to answer these questions after understanding the situation of the Christian churches in his time.

c. Prevalence of the Pagan Cults

Paul insists the wearing of veils despite the fact that it is considered a symbol of woman's subordination. In view of Paul's conviction in sexual equality, the wearing of veils may signify some other things. For Paul, other significations may be more dominant than the connotation of woman's subordination.

Although Schüssler Fiorenza's interpretation of pagan women's behaviour may be inaccurate, her speculation about Paul's intention is most plausible.

The natural reading of the text about pagan women's behaviour reveals that these women actually removed their veils, instead of unbinding their hair, to impress their congregation that they were filled with the spirit. Removing the veils actually produces the same effect of unbinding the hair: the hair will flow. The pagan women might have both discarded their veils and let their hair flow. Women in the cult of Isis, which had a centre in Corinth, behaved thus. This cult happened to be advocating sexual equality. The Corinthian women might aspire for the same equality and imitate their pagan sisters' behaviour in worship.

This hypothesis explains why Paul lays down his own concept of the order of creation in 1 Cor. 11:3, that is, in the very beginning of all his arguments. In the Corinthians' mind, the order of creation is probably:

God, pneumatic androgynous being enjoying God's image, and psychic sexually-divided being.⁸⁷ The Corinthian women might think that they would attain the status of man by discarding the veils. In their concept, this action was equivalent to becoming man through donning man's attire. It symbolized a return and moving up to the primordial androgynous state of being male. By discarding the veils, the women thought that they would attain the "authority because of the angels" (v.10).⁸⁸ This authority is possessed by men only.⁸⁹ Paul counters their concept of the order of creation, on which their behaviour based, with a different one in verse 3.

On the other hand, he was anxious to differentiate the Corinthian women from women in pagan cults. He would not have Christians taken as pagans. As a symbol of differentiation, he insists on women's wearing of veils in worship.

Having answered the question about the why for his insistence, we have almost answered the other question: Does he mean to subordinate woman by imposing this practice? Despite his insistence on women's wearing a symbol of subordination, he explicitly rejects this male-chauvinist

⁸⁷I have modified MacDonald's perception about the Corinthian order of creation. He places Eve, whose fall women mourn by wearing veils, after the sexually-divided being. Yet, I think the sexually-divided human includes both man and woman; thus there is no need to put Eve aside. Cf. MacDonald, No Male and Female, 95.

⁸⁸Ibid., 95-96.

⁸⁹Exchanging garments were found in Christian baptisms. It signifies on the putting off "the old" and putting on "the new". Exchanging garments with the opposite sex is a common phenomenon in cultures in which human essence is understood to be sexually unified or the deity venerated is bisexual or asexual. This practice connotes attaining the power of that human essence or that of the deity to protect oneself from the spirit world (Ibid., 96).

notion by asserting sexual equality in verses 11f. Only when we take these two verses into consideration can we truly understand what Paul conveys in 1 Cor. 11:3-16.

d. Assertion of Sexual Equality

We learn from the above that it was out of missionary consideration that Paul commends to Corinthian women to wear veils. The crisis may be so serious that he puts forward many arguments for it. In so doing, he does not suppress his conviction in sexual equality in the Lord as a measure of compromise. We observe that he subtly clears the veil of the connotation of subordination and explicitly declares his conviction.

i. Repudiating Connotation of Woman's Subordination

Putting aside any hidden agenda, Paul may not care about trivial things like veiling. His attitude towards food offered to idols in 1 Cor 8 and 10 is an example.

Whether one should eat food offered to idols is contingent upon the situation. He declares in 1 Cor 8:13, "if food is a cause of my brother's falling, I will never eat meat, lest I cause my brother to fall." On the other hand, in 1 Cor 10:25-27, he upholds the liberty that allows Christians to eat the food "without raising any question on the ground of conscience". He even questions in 1 Cor 10:29-30 rhetorically, "why should my liberty be determined by another man's scruples? If I partake with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of that for which I give thanks?"

These passages exhibit completely different attitudes towards food offered to idols, although they all fall in the context of his instruction against the worship of idols. As a missionary, he should be anxious to instruct against eating the food offered to idols because of the easy association with the connotation of worshipping idols. Yet it is not the case.

It is apparent that the connotation does not bother him. He tends to cast off the connotation from the action. In the same token, he also casts off the connotation of wearing veils, that is, woman's subordination, from the action itself. His assertive statement in 1 Cor 11:11f is actually his repudiation of the Jewish thought that subordinates women.

ii. Correcting Jewish Thought of Woman's Subordination

Paul's statement about sexual equality appears right after the Jewish argument as its correction.

Having concluded in verse 10 that woman has to wear proper head attire in worship, Paul is aware that the Jewish argument which he resorts to violates his conviction in sexual equality. What he insists is the wearing of the proper head attire, but not the subordination of woman. He immediately corrects it in the subsequent two verses.

In the Lord, woman is no longer subordinate to man. In verses 11f, Paul reverses the foregoing Jewish argument in content and structure: these two verses cancel off the effect of the foregoing argument with a reversing conjunction, $\pi\lambda\eta\nu$ ("but", "of course"). In

vv.8f, the Jews argue that woman is derived from man and is dependent on man; woman is thus subordinate to man. Paul corrects this argument. The situation in the Lord runs exactly the opposite: man is derived from woman, as well as woman from man; man is dependent on woman, as well as woman on man. Woman is equal to man.

Inspired by the birth process, Paul asserts that the Lord has abrogated the patriarchal hierarchy.⁹⁰ The natural order does not represent the salvation order. Woman's role in Christ does not follow her role in creation.⁹¹ He corrects the Jewish argument that subordinates woman by asserting the sexual equality in the Lord.

Up to now, we may answer the question about whether Paul espouses the idea that subordinates woman. He does not. He rejects explicitly the Jewish argument that employs the presupposition of woman's inferiority to argue for the wearing of veils.

To summarize, in 1 Cor 11:3-16, Paul insists not subjection of woman, but the wearing of veils. For fear that the Christian women will be mixed with women in the pagan cults, he instructs them to wear veils. Yet, he has not forgotten to assert sexual equality in Christ. He corrects the Jewish argument that subordinates woman. It demonstrates that he does not relinquish sexual equality while he insists on the wearing of veils.

⁹⁰Barrett, *First Epistle to Corinthians*, 255.

⁹¹*Ibid.*, 253.

C. CONCLUDING REMARKS

All the three Pauline passages are written in response to the danger of pagan influence. Yet all of them demonstrate the assertion of sexual equality without being deflected to the pagan influence. Paul exhibits ingenuity in all the passages.

From the conceptual presentation in Gal 3:28 to the contextual application in the contexts of worship and of marriage, Paul is consistent in advocating sexual equality. Gal 3:28 betrays traces of Paul's ingenious alteration of the pair of male/female to avoid the interpretation of the baptismal formula in terms of the myth of androgyne. 1 Cor 7:1-7 and 1 Cor 11:3-16 represent Paul's application of the concept of sexual equality in social-ecclesial terms. In 1 Cor 7:1-7, Paul is confronted with the invasion of pagan thought about sexual asceticism in marriage. He responds by asserting equal and mutual conjugal rights of both marital partners and extends this egalitarian attitude to other areas of marital relationship. 1 Cor 11:3-16 reveals how Paul manages to cast off the discriminative connotation of the veil from the wearing of veil while he has to deal with the possible mixture of Christians and pagans. He does not relinquish sexual equality to serve this missionary purpose.

We are aware that the Pauline passages were written in the danger of cultural transformation. They demonstrate responses to the cultural invasion without forfeiting Christian value. This tells us that the Christian conviction in sexual equality is not intended to be eschatologically applicable only.

III. MALE CHAUVINIST DEUTERO-PAULINE PASSAGES

Five deuterio-Pauline passages reflect the view about woman's status in general and in social-ecclesial contexts. 1 Tim 2:8-15 is splitted into 1 Tim 2:8-10 and 1 Tim 2:11-15 as the former deals with women's behaviour in worship and the latter, in general. Splitting the 1 Timothy passage into two, we have one passage in general, three in marriage, and two in worship.

In stark contrast to the Pauline passages, all these deuterio-Pauline passages demonstrate male chauvinist attitude about woman. Most of them are characterized by the inclusion of ὑποτάσσω ("subjection" or "subordination").

A. IN GENERAL (1 Tim 2:11-15)

The deuterio-Pauline passage regarding woman's status in general is 1 Tim 2:11-15. Preceding this passage, in 1 Tim 2:8-10, is the parallel instructions to men and women regarding their behaviour in worship. 1 Tim 2:11-15 is, however, an application of a general rule for women about prayer.⁹² The rationales that are invoked to justify woman's subordination are applicable to general situation.

⁹²Martin Dibelius & Hans Conzelmann, The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on Pastoral Epistles (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1972), 44 & 47.

The rationales are Jewish parenetic interpretation of the creation narrative in Gen 2:18-22 and the Fall narrative in Gen 3.⁹³ These two Genesis narratives remind us of the law referred to in 1 Cor 14:34. These narratives are explicitly stated in 1 Tim 2:14f: the creation of Eve after Adam and the seduction of Eve into sin respectively. The text interprets that women, who are Eve's descendants, are subordinate to men. Women deserve this subordinate position because they are easily subject to sinning.

Women in the church are therefore asked to keep silent (1 Tim 2:11f). They are to be subordinate (ὑποταγῇ) to men's teaching in the assembly. They are not permitted (ἐπιτρέπω) to teach men, nor to have authority over men. The Greek word which is translated as "to have authority over" (αὐθεντεῖν) has a general meaning of "to have one's jurisdiction".⁹⁴ Thus the women are not even allowed to make decision for themselves.

Dibelius and Conzelmann point out the Jewish tradition which contends that Eve was indulged in sexual sin with the serpent and that childbearing was the corresponding method of salvation which absolves her of her sin.⁹⁵ By this instruction about childbearing, the text is probably also intended to contest the influence of the Gnostic loathing of marriage (1 Tim 4:3) and subsequent procreation.⁹⁶ 1 Tim 2:11-15 is thus an

⁹³*Ibid.*, 47.

⁹⁴*Ibid.*, 47, n. 19.

⁹⁵*Ibid.*, 48.

⁹⁶In the *Gospel of Egyptians*, the Lord replies to the question, 'How long will men continue to die?' by saying 'As long as women give birth'" (*Ibid.*, 49).

attempt to confer to the women domestic roles and confine them to the domestic place by a justification applicable in general.

B. IN SOCIAL-ECCLESIAL CONTEXTS

Three deutero-Pauline passages reflect their idea about woman's status in the instructions to women in social-ecclesial contexts: one in the context of marriage, two in that of worship.

1. In Marriage

The deutero-Pauline passages regarding woman in the context of marriage put woman in a subordinate position. All of them resort to non-Christian arguments and are fitted into the form of household code, which is pagan in origin.⁹⁷ They share the usage of ὑποτάσσω ("subordinate") in their instructions.

a. Col 3:18

Col 3:18 is the earliest and most complete example of household codes (Col 3:18 - 4:1) in the New Testament.⁹⁸

Sanctioned by an argument combining the Stoic phrase "as is fitting" and the Christian appeal, "in the Lord" (3:18), wives are commanded to be subject (ὑποτάσσω) to their husbands. This command is supplemented by

⁹⁷Household codes in the New Testament include Col 3:18-4:1, Eph 5:21-6:9, and 1 Pet. 2:11-3:12; 1 Tim 2:8-15; 5:1-2; 6:1-2; Tit 2:1-10; 3:1 (Furnish, "Household codes", *ABD*, III, 318). The Titus and the 1 Tim codes do not conform neatly to the schema of household codes, but the groupings and content are close (David C. Verner, *The Household of God: the Social World of the Pastoral Epistles* [SBL Dissertation Series 71; Chico, California: Scholars, 1983], 93, n. 17).

⁹⁸Brendan Byrne, *Paul and the Christian Woman* (Minnesota: Liturgical, 1988), 82; E. Lohse, *A Commentary on the Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), 156.

a positive Christian command of love on husbands. The negative admonition against the husbands' being harsh with their wives (3:19) is to protect the wives, who do not have the legal rights to charge their husbands' harsh treatment.⁹⁹

Col 3:18 is the first example of "love-patriarchalism".¹⁰⁰ Should the husbands love their wives first or should the wives submit to their wives first does not matter. In either case, a patriarchal order is presupposed. What is modified is that the power of the husbands' authority over their wives is limited.¹⁰¹ The patriarchal structure is therefore not totally adopted, but it is not repudiated either.¹⁰² Wives are no longer considered their husbands' equals. This conclusion is reached by appeal to non-Christian arguments in the Stoic phrase and in the Greco-Roman form of household codes.

b. Eph 5:22-33

In general, Ephesians is considered to be modelling on and systematically expanding the ideas of Colossians.¹⁰³ With regard to

⁹⁹Frederick F. Bruce, The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians (Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1984), 164-165.

¹⁰⁰Byrne, Christian Woman, 82.

¹⁰¹Witherington, Genesis, 154.

¹⁰²Ibid., 53; Bruce, Colossians, Philemon, and Ephesians, 163.

¹⁰³Furnish concludes on De Wette, Holtzmann, Mitton, and Lindemann's arguments, which support Ephesians dependence on Colossians ("Ephesians, Epistle to the", ABD, II, 537 & 540). See also Witherington, Genesis, 155 and Eduard Lohse, A Commentary on the Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), 156, n. 13 for a comparison of Eph. 5:21-6:9 and Col. 3:18-4:1.

husband-wife relationship in particular, Eph 5:22-33 is clearly an expansion and modification of the Colossians one. It is also written in the Greco-Roman form of household codes.

The Ephesians passage begins and ends with the injunction to wives that they should submit to (ὕποτασσω) their husbands. This specific summon is preceded by a general one to all believers to be subject to one another (5:21). The message to wives is also conveyed in Colossians. Yet Ephesians replaces the Colossians phrase "as is fitting in the Lord" by one denoting unconditional submission, "in everything" (5:24). Ephesians further puts women's submission to their husbands in an analogy of the church's submission to Christ.

Husbands, in return, are called to love their wives (5:25, 28, 33), as Christ loves and sacrifices for the church. The headship of husbands over wives, again, is put in an analogy of the headship of Christ over the church (5:22).¹⁰⁴ The notion of head-body relationship between Christ and the church is transferred to that between husbands and wives.¹⁰⁵ As Christ and the church are surely not equals, neither should husbands and wives be.¹⁰⁶ The Ephesians instruction thus supplements the love-patriarchalism in Colossians with a christological clause.

¹⁰⁴Here κεφαλή ("head") is to be interpreted as "authority", rather than "source" with reference to the admonition to subjection (Byrne, Christian Woman, 84). See also Witherington, Genesis, 158.

¹⁰⁵Cf. 1 Cor 12:12-27; 12:27 in particular: Paul speaks of believers (vs. Church) as body of Christ metaphorically. In this metaphor, the body of Christ is composed of different parts, the head being one equal to other parts (12:21), i.e., the head is not superior to and does not govern the body.

¹⁰⁶Schüssler Fiorenza, Memory, 269.

The author may have an implicit intention to transform the patriarchal order by the love command, as in Colossians. The christological analogy, however, enforces and justifies the inferior position of the wives. The christological analogy also enforces theologically the patriarchal order in marital relationship. While the exhortations to the husbands are likely based on the Christian command "to love your neighbour as yourself", those to the wives are not: they insist on "the proper social behavior of women".¹⁰⁷

c. Tit 2:4-5

This Titus passage teaches about how young women should relate to their husbands. Like all other regulations about church members' behaviour in Titus, this one is conveyed through "Titus".¹⁰⁸ Unlike them, however, it is further removed. The advice to the young women is embedded in that to the old women. In contrast, the advice to the young men is not embedded in that to the old men. As in the Colossians and Ephesians household codes, young women are advised to love their husbands (v.4) and be submissive (ὕποτασσω) to them (v.5). The exhortation to men to love their wives, which is present in the love-patriarchalism in the Colossians and Ephesians household codes, is not repeated in the Titus passage, however.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., 270.

¹⁰⁸Dibelius & Conzelmann, Pastoral Epistles, 140.

Young women have to "fulfill their household duties well".¹⁰⁹ The author clearly intends to affirm women's conventional domestic role, which is reflected in traditional household codes. The teaching may be written with an apologetic motive to counter the opponents in some circles which grant women some other roles, to teach and to preach.¹¹⁰ The negative presentation of the apologetic motive, "that the word of God may not be discredited", may reflect a defensive missionary position (in order not to be rejected by the pagan society).¹¹¹

To sum up, the deutero-Pauline passages about woman in marriage all adopt the Greco-Roman form of household codes and explicitly command the wives to be subordinate. While the Colossians and Ephesians passages supplement the instruction of wife's submission with the command of husband's love as in love-patriarchalism, the Titus passage does not.

2. In Worship

Two deutero-Pauline passages, 1 Cor 14:33b-35 and 1 Tim 2:8-10, deal with women's behaviour in worship.

¹⁰⁹Translation by Dibelius & Conzelmann (*Ibid.*, 141).

¹¹⁰*Ibid.*; Byrne, *Christian Woman*, 90.

¹¹¹Byrne, *Christian Woman*, 89.

a. "1 Cor 14:33b-35"¹¹²

1 Cor 14:33b-35 is placed in 1 Corinthians but is categorized as deuterio-Pauline by a number of scholars as it is considered an interpolation.¹¹³ This claim is justified by a number of cogent arguments.

Firstly, 1 Cor 14:33b-35 and 1 Tim 2:8-15 are strikingly similar. Not only do they share similar content, they also share similar materials-- the usage of ἐπιτρέται ("are permitted") and ὑποτάσσω ("subordinate"). Both appeal to Genesis narratives to subordinate women to silence. The language of both passages belongs to the tradition of household ethical codes.¹¹⁴ Secondly, the peculiar usage of ἐπιτρέται ("are permitted") is found only in 1 Tim 2:12; the usage of ὑποτάσσω ("subordinate") is typical only in deuterio-Pauline household codes.¹¹⁵ Thirdly, 1 Cor 14:33b-35 is self-contained and upsets the context, which follows the theme of prophecy.¹¹⁶ The above grounds are cogent enough to support the

¹¹²Verse 33b does not link well with verse 33a, nor with verse 37. Although the repetition of "in all the churches" is redundant, it is included here (Cf. Murphy-O'Connor, "Interpolations", 90). On the other hand, verse 36 is not included because it cannot refer to women. The word "alone" in masculine form indicates that the addressees refer to men (Murphy-O'Connor, *ibid.*, 90). It may also refer to the whole congregation (Robertson & Plummer, *First Epistle to Corinthians*, 326).

¹¹³The scholars (e.g. Barrett, Conzelmann, MacDonald, Murphy-O'Connor, Walker) generally agree that the block which subdue women's speech is an interpolation. Walker gives a very comprehensive summary of the arguments ("Paul's Views of Women", 95, n. 6). About interpolations, see Murphy-O'Connor, "Interpolations", 92 and Dennis R. MacDonald, "A Conjectural Emendation of 1 Cor 15:31-32: Or the Case of the Misplaced Lion Fight" (*HTR* 93 [1980]), 266.

¹¹⁴Pheme Perkins, *Ministering in the Pauline Churches* (N.Y./Ramsey: Paulist, 1982), 41.

¹¹⁵Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 246.

¹¹⁶*Ibid.*

claim that 1 Cor 14:33b-35 is an deutero-Pauline interpolation. The appeal to law also lends support to this claim.

In this passage, women are severely forbidden to speak in the assemblies. They should be subordinate and should learn from their husbands at home. Three reasons are given to justify the women's keeping silence. Firstly, it is a universal church practice (v.33b). Secondly, it is stated in the law (v.34). Thirdly, it is against social propriety ("shameful"), for women to speak (v.35). The first and the last reasons are straightforward. The second one, the appeal to the law, is obscure. The meaning of "to speak" (λαλεῖν) is an important clue to unravel its meaning.

A suggestion for the meaning of speaking is inspired speech, but it is not convincing. Obviously, throughout 1 Cor 14 and is normally employed by Paul and in the New Testament, speaking means inspired speech, such as praying and prophesying.¹¹⁷ Yet it does not have such meaning here. Inspired speech has nothing to do with and cannot be replaced by learning through asking questions at home. Women certainly do not learn by delivering inspired speech. Thus it is unlikely that speaking be interpreted as inspired speech.

Another suggestion about the meaning of speaking (λαλεῖν) is "uninspired speech", such as chatting and raising questions. This one is more plausible than that of inspired speech. Women are probably not accustomed to attending assemblies since they have not been allowed to do so. In worship, when they come across matters they do not understand,

¹¹⁷Ibid., 332.

they immediately discuss among themselves or even interrupt the order of the worship to raise questions. As women have been barred from learning, the questions they ask may appear to be quite trivial in the eyes of the men. They may have violated a community rule -- the law referred to in verse 34.

Yet, on what basis is the law established?

Witherington suggests that the law is based on Job 29:21 which requires its members, male and female alike, to be subordinate to the community leadership by keeping silent, like what the learners do.¹¹⁸ Schüssler Fiorenza hypothesizes, on the other hand, that the law may be an adoption of "Greco-Roman exhortations for the subordination of wives" into the Hellenistic missionary tradition.¹¹⁹ The reference to the Jewish interpretation of Gen 3:16 is, nevertheless, more straight-forward than the above two hypotheses. It follows from Gen 3:16, which the Jews interpret for women's subordination to men, that women should not judge men's speech. Appealing to law as authority is not characteristic of Paul.

As mentioned, the situation that triggers the writing of 1 Cor 14:33b-35 is probably really some women's innocent disruption of the assembly order. The author then alludes to the Jewish interpretation of the creation narratives to justify a position that subdues the women.

¹¹⁸Witherington, Genesis, 177.

¹¹⁹Schüssler Fiorenza, Memory, 231.

b. 1 Tim 2:8-10

1 Tim 2:8-10 gives regulations about behaviour of men and women in the service of worship. Both men and women are demanded to have good conducts. Men should pray with holy hands without strife or quarrelling. Women should have good deeds. The passage displays a view that presumes women's subordination. They are demanded to adorn themselves modestly, such as in their clothing or in head attire. Allusion of this regulation about women's adornment to traditional material actually denotes their character and disposition. Modesty is a virtue of women in honorary inscriptions. Women are therefore expected to exhibit this modest temperament and submissiveness in appearance.

Briefly summarized, the two deutero-Pauline passages that deal with women's behaviour in worship tend to subordinate women to men. Women should exhibit this subordination by their silence and modest appearance in worship.

C. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The deutero-Pauline passages about woman's status in general and in social-ecclesial contexts are all characterized by the theme of subordination of women. Most of them expresse this theme explicitly by the usage of ὑποτάσσω ("subjection" or "subordination"). This male chauvinist position

appears to be resulted from adoption of pagan values supplemented by Jewish parenesis.

The presupposition and justification of woman's subordination in general provides support for its applications in contexts. When the deuterio-Pauline writers have to teach in specific contexts or to solve particular problems, they all tend to succumb to the non-Christian influence prevalent in that culture. The marital relationship is coated in the form of Greco-Roman household codes or Stoic appeal to nature. Women's submission is justified by the Jewish interpretation of the creation order and that of the Fall narrative in Genesis.

IV. FACTORS LEADING TO REGRESSIVE DEVELOPMENT OF WOMAN'S STATUS

From Chapters II and III above, we observe that the Pauline passages suggest sexual equality and the deuterio-Pauline passages advocate subordination of woman. We can therefore categorize the former passages as egalitarian and the latter, male chauvinist.

The deuterio-Pauline passages are considered to be written later than the Pauline passages. The Christian egalitarian position is traceable to a time before Paul, indicated in the pre-Pauline baptismal formula of Gal 3:28. Other Pauline passages dealing with women's behaviour, 1 Cor 7:1-7 and 1 Cor 11:3-16, are Paul's contextual application of his egalitarian conviction expressed in Gal 3:28. The male chauvinist position advocated in the deuterio-Pauline writings is thus a gradual departure from this Christian egalitarian position.

The deuterio-Pauline passages apparently do not share the egalitarian views. The usage of ὑποτάσσω ("subjection") in deuterio-Pauline passages is a proof. When Paul employs this word, he uses it to denote subjection of Christ or all creation to God. Yet the deuterio-Pauline passages use it to denote subjection of woman to man. Subjection to the heavenly Lord is therefore gradually displaced by subjection to earthly lords.

In the concept of social development, development towards an egalitarian position is considered a progress in society. The more backward a society is, the more dominant is one's prescribed roles, such as gender,

in determining one's position; in an advanced society, it is the ascribed roles, such as capability, which determine one's position. The above exegetical study reveals to us that, with regard to the attitude towards woman's status, the Christian churches were egalitarian before they became male chauvinist. From the perspective of social development, woman's status in the Pauline epistles suffers from a regressive development.

Examination of the passages has given us some hints about the factors leading to the regressive development.

On the one hand, the Pauline churches may not find it necessary to put effort to consolidate or promote sexual equality. The existence of prominent women leaders may explain to us why the Pauline churches do not consolidate the egalitarian idea sufficiently. This deficiency may have left the door open for the regression.

On the other hand, the deuterio-Pauline churches are more prone to the influence of their *Sitz im Leben*. We notice that the deuterio-Pauline passages tend to adopt values prevalent in the *Sitz im Leben* without asserting Christian values.

These two factors combine in effect to lead the Christian churches to the regressive development of woman's status. In the following, we shall examine each factor.

A. INSUFFICIENT CONSOLIDATION IN PAULINE CHURCHES

One factor leading to the regressive development of status of woman's status in the Pauline epistles may be insufficient consolidation of the egalitarian position in the Pauline churches.

This deficiency can be inferred from two clues: the situational nature of the Pauline passages about women and the presence of prominent women leaders in Pauline churches.

1. Situational Nature of Pauline Passages

From the situational nature of Pauline passages, we can see that Paul does not intend to promote the idea of sexual equality.

Paul clearly has no intention to write a tract on sexual equality. In 1 Cor 11:3-16, Paul insists on women's head attire in worship just to avoid the Christian churches from being identified with pagan cults. In 1 Cor 7:1-7, he mentions equality in marital relationship when he aims at fighting the pagan idea of sexual abstinence in marriage. Unless the situation demands it, Paul may not write about women. Presumably, his understanding of the world as imminent passing away (1 Cor 7:31) may lead him not to pay less attention to the promotion of egalitarian ideas than, say, preaching of the gospel. Moreover, the egalitarian ideas are mentioned almost in passing. It implies that Paul does not intentionally promote the egalitarianism reflected in the baptismal formula. Paul's perception of the world and his

attitude towards promotion of sexual equality are very likely adopted by the Pauline churches.

2. Prominence of Women Leaders reflected in Pauline Epistles

In the Pauline epistles, we find evidences in the Pauline epistles that many women become recognized leaders in early Christian churches. There are also other canonical texts that testify to this situation. Women leaders have contributed greatly to the churches' mission. This may give Paul and the Pauline churches the inaccurate impression that sexual equality has been consolidated and does not need further promotion.

Rom 16:1-16 is an important testimony to women leaders' prominence.

In this ancient greeting card, Paul addresses the women leaders as his equals -- prominent and leading missionaries. He commends Mary, Tryphea, Tryphosa and Persis for their hard labour in the Lord (Rom 16:6, 12).

Prisca (Priscilla) is another prominent woman leader. Paul compliments her, and her husband, for toiling as hard as him (Rom 16:3-5, 1 Cor 16:19). He calls the couple his most prominent co-workers. He always puts Prisca before her husband when he mentions the couple. So does the author of Acts. Prisca is also called the "catechist and teacher" of Apollos, who is a leading apostle like Paul (Acts 18:26). Prisca, as a church leader, is likely considered to be more prominent than her husband by Paul and the author of Acts.

The existence of women apostles are revealed too. Paul relates Junia and her husband as "outstanding among the apostles" (Rom 16:7). Paul then considers Junia an apostle. As a woman, Junia enjoys the privilege of being an apostle. It implies that women's contribution and capabilities are recognized as much as men's.

Another prominent woman leader which Paul mentions is Phoebe (Rom 16:1f). Paul gives her two titles. He entitles her *διάκονον* ("deaconess"), leader, of the local congregation of Cenchrae. In the New Testament and in secular sources, this term refers to preaching and teaching. Phoebe is recognized as an official preacher and teacher. Paul also calls Phoebe *προστάτις* ("patroness") for Paul and many others. She is certainly a leader with authority in the Christian community,

Above all, Phoebe should be important in Paul's planned Spanish mission. It testifies to her capability. It is very likely that, to Phoebe, Paul has entrusted the important task of introducing him, as a stranger, to the Roman churches to be a partner in the Spanish mission. Likely, she has promised to patronize his trips between Jerusalem and Rome. She must be very diplomatic in persuading the Roman churches to receive Paul as a partner for the Spanish mission without bearing much financial and political responsibility. In Paul's eyes, she is surely very reliable in "wealth, social prestige, and legal status", or he will not have entrusted to her so important a task.¹²⁰

¹²⁰Robert Jewett, "Paul, Phoebe, and the Spanish Mission," in *The Social World of Formative Christianity and Judaism*, eds. by J. Neusner et. al. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), 151-153.

In the stage of the early Christian development when house churches were important, some women leaders were founders and leaders. Lydia founded the house church in Philippi (Acts 16:14). Apphia led a house church in Colossae (Philemon 2). Euodia and Syntyche contended with Paul "side by side" (Phil 4:3).

From Paul's address to these women leaders and other canonical evidence, they work independently from Paul and on an equal basis with him.¹²¹ Their presence signifies a progressive period in which capability and labour, rather than gender or procreative capabilities, determined one's position.

We may also speculate that the women leaders have gained stronghold in Christian churches. The women leaders' status must have been so widely recognized, and their work so applauded, that arguments other than theological ones are not strong enough to put them back to their "proper" place at home. The deuterio-Pauline writers therefore have to resort to theological support -- the christological clause in Eph 5:22-33, the Jewish interpretation of creation order and the Fall in 1 Tim 2:13f, and the allusion to the creation order and the Fall in 1 Cor 14:33b-35 -- to suppress woman's status.

Bearing witness to these women leaders' prominence, it is quite reasonable that Paul and the Pauline churches presume that sexual equality have been sufficiently consolidated in Christian churches.

¹²¹Schüssler Fiorenza, "Word, Spirit and Power", 30-36.

To summarize, the deficiency of consolidation in Pauline churches may have opened the door for the regression of woman's status. Yet, a more significant factor that has led to the regression is probably the conformable response of the deuterio-Pauline churches to their *Sitz im Leben*.

B. CONFORMITY TO *SITZ IM LEBEN* IN DEUTERO-PAULINE CHURCHES

Both Pauline and deuterio-Pauline churches were situated in similar Greco-Roman *Sitz im Leben*. Their responses to it differed, however.

As a minority religious group, the Christian churches had to gain foothold or even popularity in a secular and hostile Greco-Roman society. This society happened to be associating, somehow identifying, household submission with political submission. Greco-Roman political science often drew an analogy between the house and the city: "the rejection of the husband's authority by the wife, or of the master's authority by the slave, or of the father's authority by sons led to anarchy in both home and city, to the rejection of the king's authority, and to the *degeneration* of the constitution from monarchy to democracy".¹²² A lot of eastern cults were much criticized because their advocacy of sexual equality threatened the

¹²²Balch, Let Wives be Submissive, 76.

Roman constitution.¹²³ The Christian churches would also be criticized if they advocated sexual equality.

Although the *Sitz im Leben* was similar, the Pauline and deuteropauline passages reflect two distinct ways of response. Despite political criticism, all the Pauline passages assert Christian conviction of sexual equality while realizing the pagan influence in their *Sitz im Leben*. In contrast, the deuteropauline churches were confronted with the reality of settling down in the earthly world. To avoid the political criticism, the deuteropauline churches sought to conform to social conventions without asserting the egalitarian Christian conviction.

We find support to this analysis about the conformity of the deuteropauline churches to their *Sitz im Leben* from both the form and the content of the deuteropauline passages.

1. Conformity in Form

Most deuteropauline passages adopt the conventional form of the Greco-Roman or Hellenized household codes. It is an important evidence of the conformity to their *Sitz im Leben*.

All deuteropauline passages, except perhaps 1 Cor 14:33b-36, resemble classical Greek household codes in the three-part form.¹²⁴ The Greek household codes address only to the head of a household (husband-father-master). Modifying these pagan household codes, the deuteropauline

¹²³Ibid., 65-80; Byrne, Christian Woman, 91.

¹²⁴The three-part form appears first in Aristotle (Balch, Let Wives be Submissive, 9).

Pauline passages address also to the corresponding inferior social classes (husbands-wives, parents-children, masters-slaves), treating them as responsible and independent parties. In addition, in each part of a deuteropauline household code, the inferior is addressed first, instructed to honour and respect the superior, who is in turn exhorted to take care of the lower class.¹²⁵ Conversely, closest parallels to the New Testament household codes are found in first-century Hellenistic Judaism.¹²⁶

Besides the adoption of pagan household codes, the deuteropauline passages also use Stoic phrases like "as is fitting" (Col 3:18) and "this pleases" (Col 3:20).¹²⁷

We easily detect the conformity in form of the deuteropauline passages to the pagan forms prevalent in the *Sitz im Leben*.

2. Conformity in Content

The deuteropauline passages also exhibit conformity in content to the norms of their *Sitz im Leben*.

Not only do the deuteropauline passages resemble the pagan household codes in form, but also in content.¹²⁸ The deuteropauline

¹²⁵Lohse, Colossians and Philemon, 155-156.

¹²⁶Both Crouch and Schroeder consider that Philo's work displays the closest parallels to the Christian household codes, the Colossians one in particular (Balch, Let Wives be Submissive, 6-8).

¹²⁷Ibid., 2; Lohse, Colossians and Philemon, 156.

¹²⁸Different functions of the New Testament household codes are suggested: i) to give "general ethical exhortation unrelated to specific situation" (Dibelius and Weidinger); ii) to "repress social unrest within the churches among Christian slaves and wives" caused by their reading of Gal 3:28 (Schroeder and Crouch); iii) missionary function (Schroeder) (Balch, Let Wives be Submissive, 10).

passages, like the pagan household codes, confer significance and affirmation on family as a social unit. They also structure the relationships in a family in a patriarchal manner.

Deutero-Pauline passages do correct the ignorance of the inferior with pagan household codes by the Jewish concern of the weak on the one hand and by the Christian love command on the other. Yet the deutero-Pauline passages adopt the patriarchal order presupposed and explicitly stated in the pagan codes without challenging the order.

With regard to the conformity in content, less prominent may be the adoption of Jewish parenesis in 1 Tim 2:11-15 and 1 Cor 14:33b-36.¹²⁹ The deutero-Pauline authors must have found it hard to get Christian support for their position that they resort to Jewish arguments. Paul can only think of the elaborate and complicated Jewish argument in 1 Cor 11:3-10 when he initially has to find support for wearing veils, which originally symbolize subordination. Similarly, probably because the deutero-Pauline authors anticipate that their view of woman's subordination may not receive applause from the Christian tradition, which emphasizes unity in the Lord, they have to justify their weak stance by Jewish theological arguments, such as the interpretation of the creation narratives.

The above arguments support the claim that the deutero-Pauline churches conformed to their *Sitz im Leben*. In conformity, they surrendered the Christian principle of unity in Christ.

¹²⁹Dibelius & Conzelmann, Pastoral Epistles, 47.

C. CONCLUDING REMARKS

To conclude, two factors are mainly identified as leading to the regressive development of woman's status in the Pauline epistle.

On the one hand, we find that the Pauline churches probably have not paid enough effort to promote and to consolidate the idea of sexual equality. This can be inferred from two observations. Firstly, the Pauline passages about women are situational in nature. This may be due to the imminent passing away of the world. Secondly, there are evidences for the prominence of women leaders in early Christian churches in the Pauline epistles and other canonical texts. It tells us that Paul and the Pauline churches may have been deluded into believing that sexual equality has been sufficiently consolidated. Therefore, we may say that the Pauline churches were probably deficient in consolidating the egalitarian idea about woman's status before it suffered from the regressive development.

On the other hand, we find that the deuterio-Pauline churches failed to inherit the concept of sexual equality. The adoption of pagan form and content in the deuterio-Pauline churches is obvious and tells us that they sought to conform to their *Sitz im Leben*.

The perception about the second coming of Christ, i.e. *parousia*, may also be a factor. The Pauline churches may have adopted Paul's idea of imminent *parousia*. The deuterio-Pauline churches, however, had to face the fact that it was delayed. This might have undermined their perseverance in sustaining the Pauline conviction in sexual equality. Yet,

this is out of the scope of our present study of the eight passages. In other words, we cannot tell from these passages about the change in the perception of the parousia. We have therefore dealt with two factors which are directly related to this study.

V. CONTEXTUAL REFLECTION

We have learned from the above exegesis and analysis that the Pauline and deuterio-Pauline passages in the New Testament advocate two distinct positions about woman's status, egalitarian position and male chauvinist one respectively. Inferred from the timing of the writing of the passages, we notice that woman's status suffered a regressive development in early Christian churches.

The regressive development resulted partly from the insufficient consolidation of the idea of sexual equality in Pauline churches. The prominence of women leaders in early churches might have misled the Pauline churches to think that the idea did not need to be further promoted. This deficiency in promotion might have left the door open to the regressive development of woman's status in the initial stage. On the other hand, the male chauvinist position of the deuterio-Pauline churches resulted from their conformity in both form and content to their *Sitz im Leben*, which tended to subordinate woman.

As mentioned in the Introduction, Christianity is charged as a religion that suppresses woman. We have to admit that this accusation is partly true. Both the accusation and the justification for the suppression is, however, due to selective quotation of the male chauvinist New Testament passages. The *Sitz im Leben* of Christian churches in Hong Kong is similar to that of the Pauline and deuterio-Pauline churches. The male chauvinist

position is also prevalent in the Chinese culture adopted by most people in Hong Kong.

The regressive development of woman's status in the early Christian churches should then offer to us, churches in Hong Kong, a basis for reflection.

A. CHRISTIAN AUTHORITY

Very diverse texts about woman's status are included in the Bible, which is referred to as the Christian authority and the guidance of Christian living. Some texts consider woman man's equals; others, man's inferior. Which of these texts represent Christian authority? Within one passage, such as 1 Cor. 11:3-16, we may find diversity. Which part of it represents Christian authority? Do we have any criteria to judge?

1. Literal Interpretation of Bible

From the radical change from Pauline to deuterio-Pauline passages in the issue about woman's status, we see how the *Sitz im Leben* affected the biblical writers' beliefs and perspectives. Biblical writers were not completely insulated from the influence of the social environment. Biblical passages cannot be read regardless of the possible cultural influence exerted on them. How can Christian authority lie in all biblical passages when they represent conflicting voices? Literal interpretation of them is no

different from garbling them. In doing so, the Bible will be exploited as a tool to justify personal will in the name of Christian authority. This exploitation will only be minimized if we read the biblical passages in their socio-political as well as their literary context.

2. Abuses in the Church

The deuterio-Pauline passages respond to their *Sitz im Leben* by conforming to it. The theological arguments they adduce to justify woman's subordination join force with the *Sitz im Leben* to form an all-conquering abusive tool against women. Regrettably, this tool is still in use today, in the Chinese feudal culture which subdues women. Selective reference to the deuterio-Pauline passages make the Chinese female believers and leaders believe that they are ordained by God to be subordinate to men.

In Hong Kong, the female population is larger than the male population in most churches. Yet two phenomena are worth noting. Firstly, church leaders are overwhelmingly male. Secondly, the church congregations tend to believe in patriarchal leadership -- both the laity leadership and the leadership in the ministerial offices.

With regard to the laity leadership, an example can be quoted. A Christian writer writes about his experience of preaching in a fellowship. He soon felt uneasy. Then he inferred that his uneasiness was due to the female leadership. The fellowship was actually composed of ladies in the main, except two men -- one was handicapped, the other is a new convert. The Christian writer advises that the leader should be a man. The

argument is simple. It is the well-known biblical sentence, "man is the head of woman". This advice is a stereotype of selective biblical referece to the deutero-Pauline passages.

This male chauvinist position discriminates at least half of the population of the Christian laity and the ministerial office holders. Although not many Christians adduce such conservative arguments explicitly, many actually espouse ideas that believe in woman's inferiority. This can be seen from the way most churches treat the female ministers.

Among the churches in Hong Kong, only four denominations ordain female ministers to be pastors.¹³⁰ In the churches having female pastors, the congregations assign, more or less, certain traditional subordinate roles to the female pastors. The believers still prefer a male leadership.¹³¹ We see how deep-rooted are patriarchal thoughts in the believers' mind.

On the other hand, some churches do not think it necessary to ordain female ministers; some have just started to discuss the issue.¹³² Unlike their male colleagues, most female ministers will never get ordained to be pastors or be minister-in-charge of the churches they have been serving for years -- just because they are female. Many female ministers are not given the opportunity to work in certain roles. They are compelled to labour in

¹³⁰The four denominations that ordain female ministers to be pastors are Sheng Kung Hui (Anglican Church) (Diocese of Hong Kong & Macau), the Church Christ in China, Hong Kong Methodist Church, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hong Kong (Winnie S. H. Ho, "Female Ordained Ministry from a Pragmatic Perspective", Chinese Churches Today [Dec. 1992], 23-24).

¹³¹Ibid.

¹³²Ibid., 23-29.

roles different from their male colleagues. For instance, some churches do not allow women to give sermons in Sunday services. In some denominations, only ordained pastors are allowed to preside the sacraments. Some female ministers are thus deprived of the chance to work in this role. Because of this compulsory "division of labour", some female ministers are paid less than the male counterparts. These female ministers are apparently sexually discriminated.

The deuterio-Pauline passages are widely quoted and arbitrarily interpreted to justify such a patriarchal church official leadership and to bar women's access. Ironically, these unrighteous acts are committed in the name of God with biblical authority.

The egalitarian Pauline passages are normally ignored in such situations. They remind us, however, that the mission of the Christian Church is not compatible with succumbing to the *Sitz im Leben*. Its mission is to assert its beliefs even in a strange or futile land. The Church should then set an example to unfetter women from their subordinate roles assigned by the Chinese culture.

It is high time the churches in Hong Kong asserted the rights of the female ministers as repentance for having, consciously or unconsciously, discriminated against the female. The church leaders should also help rectify the believers' patriarchal thought. Or else, the churches will lose the benefits and flexibility of a mixed leadership. They will also be ridiculed as less righteous than and falling behind the secular institutions.

B. SUSTAINING CONVICTIONS

From the regressive development of the position in the Pauline epistles with regard to woman's status, we can see how hard it is to sustain a conviction. It is particularly hard in a milieu that does not treasure that conviction as a conventional value and in a people that are not aware of its significance. We tend to surrender our convictions in time of crisis and to resort to conventional values -- even if they are not compatible with our convictions.

Paul was not different from us. He was familiar with Jewish teachings. He might not have any intention to suppress woman. Yet when he was confronted with the crisis of the Corinthian church, Jewish discriminatory thought crept in his mind. The deuterio-Pauline churches also conformed to their *Sitz im Leben* in critical times. Although the Christian conviction of sexual equality was once realized in the Pauline churches, insufficient emphasis and perpetuating effort left it to bear the brunt of compromise.

With regard to sexual equality, the churches in Hong Kong have been falling behind the secular world. To avoid the same regression as we find in the Pauline epistles, but to help the conviction flourish, we should devote unceasing effort to sustain the Christian conviction of sexual equality. It is worth the churches' effort. This conviction matters the rights of half of the population of the churches, sometimes even of the society.

C. TO CHRISTIANIZE OR BE PAGANIZED?

The adoption and modification of Greco-Roman household codes for Christian use can be seen as an effort of contextualization. However, in the process, the deuterio-Pauline churches seem to have their Christian faith paganized. An important Christian conviction was surrendered to political and cultural considerations. Does the Church, and to what extent, have to compromise and sacrifice its essential Christian values and its mission to transform the world in exchange for expansion or even survival? This may be a question which the Church always has to ponder. An example in the history of Chinese churches may shed some light on us.

In the nineteenth century, the anti-Christian movement accused missionaries in China of social, sexual in particular, immorality and of destabilizing the hierarchical social order stipulated by Confucian teachings.¹³³ Yet the Chinese churches did not withdraw their commitment to female education or stop admitting female believers to their services. They reacted by segregating men and women in worship by partitions, which was not practised even in Chinese temples.¹³⁴

One of the sensitive issues which the churches were confronted was footbinding of Chinese women. The churches were aware of its detrimental effect on women's health. Yet, for fear of enraging the folk, some churches

¹³³Pui Lan Kwok, *Chinese Women and Christianity 1860-1927* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1989), 10-16.

¹³⁴*Ibid.*, 102-109.

were initially ambivalent about it. Others started an anti-footbinding movement. In 1874, sixty Chinese Christian women in Xiamen organized the anti-footbinding society. The movement spreaded its influence from the churches to the society. It grew to be nation-wide. It even pressed the Empress Dowager to issue an edict to ban footbinding.¹³⁵ The churches successfully pushed forward a Christian belief among the public. Contrary to their fear, the churches emancipated women from their bondage without enraging the populace.

Persistence in upholding a Christian conviction does not necessarily endanger the survival of the Church. Giving in, nevertheless, only leaves room for abuses. The Church always lives in a culture. In the process of contextualization, however, the Church should always retain the essential convictions of Christian faith. Persisting in upholding the convictions may need courage. Distinguishing them from the non-essential requires wisdom. It is not easy, but the Church should always pursue

"whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, things of excellence and worthy of praise" (Phil 4:8).

¹³⁵Ibid., 163-174.

VI. CONCLUSION

In the above, we have examined eight passages in the Pauline epistles to find out factors that lead to a regressive development of woman's status.

In order to examine the effect of time on the position of the authors and that of the Christian churches to which they belong, the passages are divided according to the period in which they were written: the Pauline passages were supposed to be written before the deuterio-Pauline passages. The Pauline passages include Gal 3:28 (Gal 3:28c), 1 Cor 7:1-7, and 1 Cor 11:3-16. The five deuterio-Pauline passages include Col 3:18, Eph 5:22-33, Tit 2:4-5, "1 Cor 14:33b-35", and 1 Tim 2:11-15.

On the other hand, for clear reference, under each division of Pauline or deuterio-Pauline passages, we further divide them into passages aiming at general situation and those aiming at contextual applications. The contextual passages are further divided subject to their application to the social context of marriage and the ecclesial context of worship.

We have found that all the Pauline passages advocate the Christian conviction of sexual equality traceable in a pre-Pauline baptismal formula which has been modified and recorded in Gal 3:28c. In contrast, the deuterio-Pauline passages advocate the male chauvinist position of subordinating woman.

We may summarize the comparison of these passages in Paul's epistles on three levels.

On the philosophical level, the egalitarian position in the Pauline passages is intended to be universally applicable without reference to any culture. Gal 3:28 is a conceptual formulation of Christian position for general situation. Even in the contextual Pauline passages, the universal intention is prominent. All deuterio-Pauline passages exhibit no such intention, however. Even 1 Tim 2:13f, which is treated as an instruction in general, is written to justify the measure against women in the context of worship. Moreover, the contextual passages are all tainted with cultural patches.

On the theological level, the Pauline passages tend to state or reflect the egalitarian position without resorting to theological arguments. "In the Lord . . . there is no male and female" in Gal 3:28 is a statement. 1 Cor 11:11f is also a statement. 1 Cor 7:1-7 tells us about the mutual and equal rights of husbands and wives in parallel structure. In contrast, resorting heavily to theological arguments is a salient feature of the deuterio-Pauline passages. The christological argument in Eph 5:22-33 is obvious. The Jewish parenetic allusion to theological interpretation of Genesis narratives in 1 Cor 14:34 and 1 Tim 2:13f is also evident.

On the sociological level, the *Sitz im Leben* of the Pauline and deuterio-Pauline passages is similar, but their ways of response to it differ. The Pauline passages address to the *Sitz im Leben* by asserting the Christian egalitarian position. Paul subtly alters the baptismal formula to avoid the gnostic interpretation in Gal 3:28. In 1 Cor 7:1-7, he asserts equality of husbands and wives in marital relationship to counter the pagan

influence of sexual abstinence. In 1 Cor 11:3-16, he asserts sexual equality and casts off the male chauvinist connotation of wearing veils by correcting a Jewish argument. On the other hand, the deuterio-Pauline address to the *Sitz im Leben* by adopting its male chauvinist position. Not only does the form of Greco-Roman household codes tell us about their conformity, the content also exhibits this tendency. From their pagan patches and coats, we can identify that they attain their non-Christian position from adopting pagan sources.

In conclusion, as the male chauvinist deuterio-Pauline passages were written after the egalitarian Pauline passages, it is clear that woman's status suffered a regressive development in the early Christian churches. As testified by many New Testament records, women had been enjoying equal privileges of men to be prominent leaders in the churches. They had been as prominent as men in contributing to the missionary development of the Christian churches. There were even women apostles among them. They were suppressed, however, in the deuterio-Pauline period.

In this study, it is suggested that two factors led to the regressive development of woman's status. First of all, the prominence of some women leaders might have led Paul and the Pauline churches to believe that the ideal of sexual equality had been achieved. They spared their effort of further promoting this ideal. It turned out that the effort was deficient and left the door open for later regression. Another factor might be more significant: the conformity of the deuterio-Pauline churches to

their *Sitz im Leben*. The adoption of both pagan form and content led them to a prevalent male chauvinist position.

In brief, we have tried to reflect on the above finding contextually. Without understanding the cultural influence on the passages, we will easily fall prey to literal interpretation of and selective reference to biblical passages. This will lead to abusive applications. The subordinate position of female laity and official leaders in the churches of Hong Kong is exemplary of this danger. Women ministers have been victims of literal interpretation of the male chauvinist deuterio-Pauline passages. Some women ministers do not enjoy equal pay for equal work in churches. Most have been barred from ordination. We also learn that a conviction needs a great deal of time and effort to be sustained. It will easily be surrendered in crisis if it has not been consolidated. Conformity may not be the best response to the *Sitz im Leben*. Assertion of Christian conviction may produce a favourable effect that is not foreseeable beforehand. From the history of the anti-footbinding movement in China in the nineteenth century, we see positive effect in the danger of surrendering the life of Christian churches. Only in asserting its faith can the churches retain its vitality.

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